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THE DAWNING OF THE BLACK NEW SOUTH: A GEO-POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND
CULTURAL HISTORY OF BLACK ATLANTA, GEORGIA, 1966 - 1996

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2009

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation seeks to provide an intraracial narrative history of African American politics and class tensions in Atlanta, Georgia from 1966, the year when black power movement forces emerged and helped to elect Maynard H. Jackson as Atlanta's mayor to the 1996 Centennial Olympiad. Also, this study is an ambitious attempt to cultivate a newly emerging field called Black New South Studies, which, in many ways, parallels the field of African American Studies. Its research interests focus on the experiences of African Americans in the South with national and international implications as seen through a post-Civil Rights context. Grounded in primary sources, including extended interviews with black Atlantans and analyses of popular culture texts, this study grapples with the historiography of the new African American Urban History, African American Folk Culture and Resistance, and Hip Hop by charting various manifestations seen through the city's rise from regional center to global commercial city. Indeed, Atlanta is a City representing the highest educational, political, and economic aspirations and achievements of African Americans over the past century and yet home to some of the roughest and most destitute black ghettos in the South and nation. As such it represents various interconnections and interactions between diverse black populations within the urban New South.

The city's old and powerful black middle class, along with a powerful white business elite, have long shaped New South politics. Yet in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, the majority of Atlanta's black communities remained in abject poverty and gave way to some of the harshest socio-economic conditions in America at the behest of black city administrators.

An important aspect of this dissertation rejects Atlanta's "black Mecca" status. In doing so, a major dimension of this particular transformation is the role of Hip Hop culture as a counter-narrative to the evolution of Atlanta as a world-class commercial center. Specifically, the Dirty South Hip Hop Movement, manifested in such groups as OutKast and Goodie Mob, cultivated a counter movement that portrayed the experiences of the poor and homeless in Atlanta's black ghettos as the underbelly of Atlanta's rise to world fame and fortune. The music and lyrics demonstrate the inherent tensions within Atlanta's black community as the city rose to newly found prestige and status provided these artists.

To the late Timothy T. Stewart, my pacesetter whose standard of excellence in my early life set a course a path of success. To the late Dr. William L. Lester, a brilliant man who saw my quixotic ambition and gave it direction. To the late Eva Grace Forbes, whose gift of immeasurable spirit and fortitude gave way to the accomplishment of life's goals. And to my ancestors, descendents, and to all of those voices that have been silenced; use me as your vessel so the world can behold your message.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author of this dissertation would like to honor the Great King and Creator, God Almighty and His son Jesus Christ through whose sacrifice we are offered salvation, eternal life and the fruits of the Spirit. These fruits were critical and necessary for this journey. I would like to thank my wife and the Queen of my Soul, Cynthia Hobson, who not only offered encouragement, support and patience, but helped a great deal in writing this dissertation. I cannot thank you enough. I would like to thank my parents Marvin & Joy Hobson for their wisdom, guidance, and patience in my growth and development as a person. Marvin, you are a man of principles, integrity, and you taught me to do what is right. These are rare qualities in this day and age. Joy, not only have you been a mother, but my personal prayer warrior who taught me how to pray and the power of prayer. Thank you. I would like thank my siblings Timothy, Gernerique, Christi, Vince and Victoria for their constant encouragement and friendship. Thank you to my other mother, Virda Lester for your continued support, encouragement and friendship. I would like to thank my dissertation committee of Dr. David Roediger, Professor Leon Dash, and Dr. Clarence Lang for their time, patience, support and guidance. Special thanks to my Dissertation Chair, Dr. James D. Anderson and Dr. Christopher Span, whose steadfast patience and kindness not only helped to develop me as a scholar and a historian, but provided much needed entertainment and amusement. In them I have found mentors, friends, and brothers. If I am able to be half as brilliant and charitable as these gentlemen, then I will have done well. I am grateful for their guidance and supervision in the completion of this work. I would like to thank the staffs in the History and Educational Policy Studies Departments. A special thanks to Judy Patterson, Tom Bedwell, Elaine Sampson, Jenna

Pfaff and Linda Meccoli in Educational Policy Studies. Your abilities to get things done are greatly appreciated. Thank you to the University of Illinois' Graduate College and the Educational Equity Programs for their continued funding, support and opportunities. A special thanks to Ave Alvarado and Victor Perez, whose encouragement, employment and funding kept me on track throughout this journey. A special thanks to the late Iolantha Spencer and the Tuskegee University Family for your support. Thank you to the UNCF/Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship Program and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity for your financial support. I am grateful to Professors Reginald Alston and William Trent who provided office space and support throughout this process. I would like to thank my colleagues Karlos Hill, Lessie Tate, and Nicholas Gaffney for sharing your knowledge, friendship, help, and encouragement. I would like to thank the staffs in the Archives Divisions of the Robert W. Woodruff Library at the University of Illinois History and Newspaper Library; Atlanta University Center; Auburn Avenue Research Library; and the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Book Library at Emory University. A special thanks to Thomas Weissinger, Andrea Jackson, Karen Jefferson, Meredith Evans-Raiford, Kiyan Shabazz Skiffer, Francine Henderson, Janice Sikes Rogers, Kerrie Cotten Williams, Abayomi Manrique, Anita Martin, Okezie Amalaha, Felicia Render, Carmelita Pickett and Kathy Shoemaker. During my stay in Atlanta, your assistance was priceless. Also, I would like to thank Attorney and Mrs. Kimani King for opening their home to me during my stay in Atlanta. Kimani, you don't know how our conversations about Atlanta helped to contextualize this dissertation. It was greatly appreciated. Special thanks to William Ledman, Janice White Sikes Rogers, Joseph E. Thompson, Trashinda Wright, Karl Barnes, Kerrie Cotten Williams and Jerry Roberts for telling me your stories experience. Also, thanks to Robert Guice for his audio expertise in recording the interviews and Monica Murphy for her transcription of the interviews. A special thanks to the

Forbes, Branson, Kellum and Lester families for their prayers and support. To my friend Rodrick Barge and to Glenn Coleman, Keith Roland, Mikki Johnson, Ryan Vann, Joseph James, Joseph T. Williams and the rest of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, thank you for your continued friendship. Lastly, thank you Selma, Alabama, for it was you that gave me a heart and love for people.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABHMS	American Baptist Home Missionary Society
ACOG	Atlanta Committee on the Olympic Games
AFSCME	American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
AMA	American Missionary Association
ANVL	Atlanta Negro Voters League
AOC	Atlanta Organizing Committee
AUC	Atlanta University Center
AUDC	Atlanta Urban Design Commission
CAP	Central Atlanta Progress
CCAA	Community Council of the Atlanta Area
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Cable News Network
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DNC	Democratic National Conference
EOA	Economic Opportunity of Atlanta Program
EU, MARBL	Emory University, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Collection
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GED	Graduate Equivalency Diploma
GUTS	Georgians Unwilling to Surrender

HOPE, Inc	Help Our Public Education
ICDC	Inner City Development Corps
MARTA	Metro Atlanta Rapid Train Authority
MASE	Metropolitan Association for Segregated Education
MEA	Merit Employment Association
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAB	National Alliance of Businessmen
OASIS	Organizations Assisting Schools in September
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Association
SNCC	Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee
SWATS	Southwest Atlanta
TAP	The Atlanta Project
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USOC	United States Olympic Committee
VEP	Voter Education Project

INTRODUCTION

On September 18, 1990, the International Olympic Committee selected Atlanta, Georgia, to be the host city of the XXVI (1996) Centennial Olympiad. Under the leadership of Mayor Maynard Holbrook Jackson Jr., Atlanta's clinching of the Centennial Olympiad was a sum total of a changed Atlanta which transformed its urban status from regional capital of the South and gave it a new moniker as the Deep South's first world class and international city. It was Jackson's might and tenacity that spearheaded this opportunity, one that carried its own contradiction. The Centennial Olympic Games marked Atlanta as a world-class city, but it also marked a need for a sharper focus on its history, culture and social development. The world and local communities now reckoned with Atlanta and paid increasing attention to her accomplishments and failures; she stood at the world's center stage and endured the world's praise and blame. This was the second time within a century that Atlanta stood in a glass house. Almost one hundred years prior, in 1895, the City hosted the Cotton States and International Exposition where African American educator and leader Booker T. Washington gave his "Atlanta Compromise" address and drew national attention to Atlanta as the chief exemplar of a "New South" that had arisen from the ashes of the Civil War.

With the Olympics, attention now focused on Atlanta's accomplishments as a regional commercial center and its social failures as evidenced in the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906 and Georgia's long history of racial lynching between 1895 and 1935.¹ Nonetheless, unlike other southern urban areas, Atlanta is unique and has been deemed historically by pundits as the "promise land" of the New South for African Americans. After the Civil War, newly freed blacks migrated from rural places in the South to Atlanta to work in the textile mills and earned

¹ Historical American Lynching Project, <http://people.uncw.edu/hines/HAL/HAL%20Web%20Page.htm>.

wages which enabled them to achieve a better quality of life than possible under pre-Emancipation servitude slave labor conditions. Simultaneously, African Americans education seekers came to Atlanta, educated themselves, and formed a thriving black middle class. This black middle-class was largely created and sustained by Atlanta's unique system of black institutions of higher learning. At the turn of the twentieth century, Atlanta was home to four black colleges: Morehouse, Spelman, Morris Brown and Clark; one black university, Atlanta University (now Clark-Atlanta University); and one black seminary center: Gammon Theological Seminary. This unique cluster of higher educational institutions played a pivotal role in the production of a black middle class community. William E. B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*, written in 1903, explores the development of this new professional class and its implications for the strivings of the black South. Du Bois writes "Such are not men of the sturdier make; they of Atlanta turned resolutely toward the future; and that future held aloft vistas of purple and gold--Atlanta, Queen of the cotton kingdom; Atlanta, Gateway to the Land of the Sun; Atlanta, the new Lachesis, spinner of web and woof for the world. So the city crowned her hundred hills with factories, and stored her shops with cunning handiwork, and stretched long iron ways to greet the busy Mercury in his coming. And the nation talked of her striving."² This quote is not only particular to black Atlanta, it is a more general description of the political economic rise of Atlanta.

Atlanta has an old and powerful black middle class and its historical role in shaping New South politics, as well as its relationship to the City's larger black working class, deserves greater and varied historical analysis. It is a city representing the highest educational, political, and economic aspirations and achievements of African Americans over the past century and yet home to some of the roughest and most destitute black ghettos in the South and nation. Thus

² W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks* reprint (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 72.

Atlanta represents various interconnections and interactions between diverse black populations within the urban New South. The aforementioned educational institutions are all located in Atlanta's West End, where prominent blacks lived, yet it was also home to the city's black ghetto. Histories of Atlanta often portray it as a thriving city with wealthy blacks, but Atlanta also has one of the highest poverty rates amongst comparable U.S. urban areas. This story is rarely told but is a worthy and necessary discussion for any comprehensive and balanced treatment of Atlanta's economic and social development.

This present dissertation argues that modern Atlanta became a geo-political space for a particular strand of black nationalism, manifested in education, business, politics and cultural expression, and reflective of the shift of blacks from rural to urban landscapes. The research focus starts in 1966, the year in which both the Black Power movement emerged and urban unrest struck the city to change the South in general and Atlanta in particular. It tells how Atlanta's black community stood at the center of city's rise to world class status and of how Atlanta's black working class became increasingly disenfranchised as the larger city was franchised within a global economy. A major dimension of my examination of this particular transformation is the role of Hip Hop culture in offering a counter narrative about the evolution of Atlanta as a world-class commercial center. Specifically, I focus on the Dirty South Hip Hop Movement, manifested in such groups as OutKast and Goodie Mob and the way in which it cultivated a counter movement that portrayed the experiences of the poor and homeless in Atlanta's black ghettos as the underbelly of Atlanta's rise to world fame and fortune. I examine the music and lyrics of these artists as a means to demonstrate the inherent tensions within Atlanta's black community as the city rose to new and unprecedented levels of prestige and status. As reflected in the Dirty South Hip Hop Movement, segments of the black working class

believed that Mayors Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young's facelift of the city occurred at the expense of ordinary working people, who frequently criminalized, segregated and further divided along class lines. In contrast to this view, segments of Atlanta's black middle class saw Jackson and Young as a business and political prodigy who spearheaded the transformation of Atlanta into a world-class commercial center. Winning the Centennial Olympic Games affirmed Atlanta's status as a reinvigorated city built for global commerce, and thus for the second time Atlanta had risen like the mythical phoenix, rebuilding itself from the rubble and ash as the South's first truly international city. Symbolically, Atlanta's hosting of the 1996 Olympic Games served as a pivotal moment in history of the Black New South. Black politicians and professionals stood at the center of the one of the American South's greatest achievements. In a region that had been historically marked by the sordid relationships of racism and oppression, it seemed as if blacks had awakened from the nightmare of Jim Crow into the dream of a new "black Mecca." Because of the Centennial games, Atlanta's history, its people and culture became points of interest from the local to the global and its new status placed it at the crux of intra-racial class tensions captured in the cultural expressions of the Dirty South Hip-Hop Movement. This movement opened Atlanta in particular and the South in general to a working class critique of the social costs of the transition from a regional city to a global commercial center. Hence, the Dirty South Hip-Hop Movement provides a lens for contrasting black middle class and black working class sensibilities regarding Atlanta's emergence into an international city.

Historiography

The Dawning of the Black New South introduces a new interdisciplinary focus on new African American urban history that I call Black New South studies. This newly constructed field will in ways similar to African American studies contribute to scholarship of the black South in a post-Civil Rights context. There is little scholarship that deals with the geo-political, social and cultural history of black Atlanta, Georgia in a post Civil-Rights context. In order to effectively ground this dissertation, I have elected to employ three historiographies: the new African American Urban historiography, a historiography of African American cultural resistance and the historiography of Hip Hop.

New African American Urban Historiography

Since the 1960s, there have been several major shifts in the historical scholarship on African Americans in urban areas. In the late 1960s, urban historians surmised that the plight of the “inner city” faced indomitable odds. Later, in a February 1983 issue of the *Journal of Urban History*, Elliott Rudwick surveyed the state of urban history in an article entitled “Black Urban History: In the Doldrums.” At the end of the 1960s, when urban problems and racial conflict dominated the public consciousness, Rudwick noted that “black urban history appeared to be headed for an unbeatable future.” He contended that “policymakers, scholars, and Americans generally sought some historical depth about how these troubles began.” However, Rudwick

concluded that African American urban history had become a quagmire of narrowly focused, poorly conceived, or weakly researched studies.³

In 1987, Kenneth Kusmer reexamined the scholarly landscape in a review essay entitled “Urban Black History at the Crossroads.” Kusmer evaluated a wave of new books published in the mid 1980s, suggesting “a new renewal of interest in black urban history as a research field.” Important new community studies offered a variety of new ways of understanding the urbanization of the black population. Yet for Kusmer, the diversity of the new scholarship in African American urban history raised questions about the direction of the field.⁴ By the mid 1990s, black urban history had taken off in many new directions and utilized interdisciplinary methodologies that pushed the field outside of the Rudwick/Kusmer paradigm. In May of 1995, the *Journal of Urban History* published ten articles that stressed the new tensions and trends that had emerged in African American urban history. In 1996, historians Kenneth Goings and Raymond Mohl compiled and edited *The New African American Urban History*, documenting new trends and tensions while juxtaposing the new urban history with older models. The new African American urban history examines southern cities and focuses on trends such as agency and resistance, social histories that focused more on grass roots activism and less on black elites. It also focuses on migration and early social movements which produced new ways of looking at the periodization of African American history, examines religion, black theology and the teaching of black liberation, reexamines civil rights and understands the creation of the second ghetto and the underclass.⁵

³ Elliott Rudwick, “Black Urban History: In the Doldrums,” *Journal of Urban History* 9, no. 2 (February, 1983): 251.

⁴ Kenneth Kusmer, “Urban Black History at the Crossroads,” *Journal of Urban History* 13, no. 4 (August 1987): 460.

⁵ Kenneth Goings and Raymond Mohl, *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996).

In these new shifts, historians focused especially on the importance of agency among African Americans— an interpretive thrust that has shaped new writing in the field for a decade or more. *The New African American Urban History* conveys a sense of active involvement, of empowered people engaged in struggle, living their lives in dignity and shaping their own futures. Earlier scholarship in African American urban history was heavily weighted toward the study of black elites and elite organizations; it tended to focus on segregation, race relations, and the role of the political and economic institutions (white and black) in establishing the parameters of black life. The new African American urban history has abandoned the disproportionate emphasis on black elites to portray a more diverse community with sharply etched divisions of class and culture. Earlier works depicted working class as an undifferentiated mass that followed the lead of prominent black elites. The new history has provided a deeper more textured sense of the black working class—of its transformation from southern agricultural roots to urban industrial labor, from peasantry to proletariat. At the same time there is a recognition that many aspects of rural African American culture persisted or were adapted to life in the big city. Black working class community and culture were made and remade in response to urban and industrial life.⁶

⁶ Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994). *Race Rebels* has unearthed new forms of agency that demonstrate wider patterns of resistance. In a study of the blacks in the urban South, Kelley described a tradition of “infrapolitics”—a pattern of daily behavior, an oppositional culture, more or less overt, in which African Americans demanded respect and recognition in uncounted daily encounters in the streets streetcars and busses, on the job, in the courts, and elsewhere. See also Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interest: Race, Class and Power in Twentieth Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991); Aldon Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Free Press, 1986); Charles Payne, *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America*, (New York: New York University Press, 1997); John D’Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2005).

Historiography of African American Folk Culture and Resistance

The dynamic formation of the black American South may have more to tell us about the nation's tragic racist past and enduring racial dilemmas than any other region, yet this region remains understudied in the field of American history. Despite some important studies by pioneering scholars in the field, the formation of black southern culture in the context of slavery and racial oppression still needs to be documented and analyzed over time and space.

In the mid to late 1950s, shifts within the historiography of slavery challenged the paternal sentiments spawned by U. B. Phillips and historians began looking at African slaves and the culture that they created outside of the gaze of their white masters. Sterling Stuckey's *Slave Culture* looks at the ways in which Africans of different ethnicities in the course of their enslavement in America as slaves worked together to form a common African culture and a black nation. He argues that these enslaved African had a central value system that stemmed from their ancestral past and influence. This was the cultural value system of slaves at the time of emancipation and it would prove to be a major force in shaping race relations between blacks and whites in the U.S. For his analysis, Stuckey utilized music, dance and folklore to show how African culture shaped the emergence of black culture in the United States.⁷

Stuckey's argument is one that is connected to a larger trend in historical writing where the interpretation of black culture became increasingly important. Before Stuckey, scholars such as John Lovell Jr. and Lawrence Levine had set out to understand the most elemental social

⁷ Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundation of Black America* reprint (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); See also John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, 1959); Eugene Genovese, *Roll! Jordan Roll!: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976.)

interpretation of African American folk life and spoke convincingly of the need for future exploration of slave spirituals for their social truths. In Lovell's case, he believed that in order to uncover the social messages embedded in black expressive culture, he suggested a close examination of the meaning of black song and black poetry in America. In his study of spirituals, he conferred with scholars, musicians, and writers traveled extensively, and pursued his investigations in the areas of literature, music, dance, ethnomusicology, folklore, anthropology, theology, philosophy, history, and psychology.⁸

Lovell argued the premise that folk music really transmits a consensus of the feelings of the community. With this, Lovell identifies the folk community that gave rise to the songs and the creators who actually framed them. For that community, it was possible to define at least one goal that was probably shared by all—the goal of freedom. Lovell distinguishes several features of this community and against this background, scrutinizes the slave spiritual as to its purpose in the community, its meanings and messages, and the attitudes reflected in it. For the community, this music and folk culture expressed subtle and non-permissible messages by means of mask and symbol and pushed for scholars to go beneath the surface of the words to realize what hope was symbolized. “Only the insider knew that ‘Go Down Moses,’ or ‘Chariots a comin’ might alert those waiting as escape to freedom or that ‘Wade in the Water’ was practical instruction to a fugitive who might be chased by bloodhounds. There was a wide variety of purposes beyond the simple expression and communication.”⁹

⁸ John Lovell, *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame: The Story of How the Afro-American Spiritual was Hammered Out* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1986); Doris E. McGinty, “Black Song: The Forge and the Flame,” *Journal of Negro Education*, 44, no. 2 (Spring, 1975): 208-213; See also Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1998).

⁹ McGinty, “Black Song,” 211-12.

Lawrence Levine's *Black Culture, Black Consciousness* asserts that scholars must and can get at the life and thought of the masses of people whom historians regard as inarticulate. Levine's analysis is for scholars, a path breaking and successful attempt to utilize anonymous creations of black folk to probe their thinking and world-view and the ways in which these changed over time. This book is marked by a subtle grasp of continuity and change in black folk culture and the multiple meanings, functions, and ambiguities in the songs and stories. Shifting back and forth between the sacred and the secular, Levine first examines the sacred world-view of slaves, and demonstrates how under the impact of emancipation and the acculturation that followed over the decades, the antebellum synthesis broke down, with black culture drawing closer to mainstream American culture yet retaining its own autonomy and a distinct sense of African American identity. Levine's path breaking treatment of the spirituals exemplifies his understanding of the complexities and ambiguities in the slaves' view and how their fusion of African and Euro-Christian elements functioned to sustain personal integration and a strong sense of community in a hostile society that denied their worth as humans. In short, this folk creation--whose communal nature is revealed in the antiphonal character of the songs—revealed a rich fantasy life, pervaded not by a feeling of unworthiness, but by a sense of change, personal worth, and ultimate justice.¹⁰

Levine also utilizes secular animal trickster tales and presents the ways in which these anecdotes were different kinds of coping mechanism. Derived in Africa, these stories of powerless creatures that attain their ends through native wit and guile rather than power of authority were transformed in the United states, where the animal trickster functioned

¹⁰ Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture, Black Consciousness: Afro-American Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); August, Meier, "The Triumph of Melville Herskovits," *Reviews in American History* 6, no. 1 (March 1978): 21-28.

simultaneously on several levels; as black slave, as white master, as irrational force. In the trickster tale, the weak use their wits to evade and outfox the strong, clearly expressed the realities facing the slaves who daily had to employ guile rather than force in their relations with their masters. What becomes duly noted is the painful realistic story of the hostile environment, painting the world in brutal and irrational terms, with the tricksters seeking not only self-preservation but also status and power, and proving quite willing to use injustice and often senseless cruelty in outwitting not only the strong, but the weak as well.¹¹

Though much of African American folk culture is tied to non-secular entities, secular entities such as first work songs and later blues and jazz became a prominent part of the African American folk culture in the 20th century. Absent from black folklore, for example, were the Robin Hoods who stood up to the established power on behalf of the poor and the downtrodden. What this creates is a dialectic where on all fronts, black folk music remained in the style of audience participation and the intimate relationship that persisted between performer and audience. Moreover both the hero stories and the blues songs dealt with matter that grew out of the black experience and spoke to that experience.

Lastly, and very fittingly, Levine stresses the growing element of protest that explicitly overturns the subordinate status in which whites held blacks—that characterized black folk culture in the 20th century. This can be seen along the lines of criticizing the boss man in many work songs; in the decline of the slave trickster stories; in the rise of lore about how slave ancestors stood up to white masters, even at considerable personal cost.¹²

In the first chapter of his book *Going Through the Storm*, entitled *Through the Prism of Folklore*, Stuckey examines folk song and tales where he asserts that slaves were able to fashion

¹¹ August Meier, “The Triumph of Melville Herskovits,” 21-28.

¹² Ibid, 26.

a life and set of values—an ethos—which prevented them from being imprisoned altogether by the definitions which the larger society sought to impose. To Stuckey, this ethos was an amalgam of Africanisms and New World elements that helped blacks to feel their way along the course of American oppression, enabling them to endure. Stuckey contends that the process of dehumanization was not nearly as pervasive as Stanley Elkins would have us believe; that a very large contingent of African Americans, guided by this ethos, was able to maintain their essential humanity. In this analysis, Stuckey utilizes folklore as a means to reflect the thoughts and sensibilities of ordinary black people. He assumes that the attitudes of the masses are represented by the themes of folklore.¹³

Historiography of Hip Hop

Derrick Alridge and James B. Stewart’s “Introduction: Hip Hop in History: Past, Present, and Future” from the *Journal of African American History, Special Edition: the History of Hip Hop* is the most present historiography of Hip Hop. These authors assert that over the past three decades, Hip Hop has developed as a cultural and artistic phenomenon affecting youth culture around the world. From this article, it is clear that Hip Hop, for many youth, reflects the social, economic, political, and cultural realities and conditions of their lives, speaking to them in a language and manner they understand. With this, Alridge and Stewart conclude that as a result of both its longevity and its forceful message for many youth worldwide, Hip Hop cannot be dismissed as merely a passing fad or as a youth movement that will soon run its course. To them Hip Hop must be reckoned with as a cultural, political, economic, and intellectual phenomenon

¹³ Sterling Stuckey, *Going Through the Storm: The Influence of African American Art in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

worthy of scholarly study, similar to previous African American artistic and cultural movements.¹⁴

Alridge and Stewart affirm that Hip Hop culture consists of at least four components: Disc jockeying (deejaying) break dancing, graffiti art, and rapping (emceeing). Since its emergence during the early to mid 1970s, Hip Hop has included not just a musical genre, but cultural markers that rest on sensibilities of a generation of youth born between 1965 and 1984.¹⁵ This component of Hip Hop culture is indicative of the phenomenon's reach where it is conducive for and imperative that the voices of this generation be articulated and heard.

Alridge and Stewart's article is an invaluable resource in terms of grappling with the literature that is focused on Hip Hop. Since 1994 when Tricia Rose published her study *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, few studies have appeared that examined Hip Hop in historical terms. Rose and Robin D.G. Kelley's *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* emerged as the seminal pieces of work that grappled with the significance of Hip Hop music and culture. Rose's work lent credence to the development of Hip Hop and effectively countered the naysayers who suggested that the phenomenon was unworthy of scholarly attention in historical terms. With this, Rose investigated rap music and examined its impact on youth culture, charting and predicting numerous current trends and tensions that are central to Hip Hop culture. Though Kelley's book goes beyond a focus on Hip Hop, he connects Hip Hop to African American history and explicates it as an ongoing tradition

¹⁴ Derrick P. Alridge and James B. Stewart, "Introduction: Hip Hop in History: Past, Present, and Future." *Journal of African American History* 90, no. 3, (Summer 2005): 190-96,

¹⁵ Ibid, 190, See also Bakari Kitwana, *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2002). According to Alridge and Stewart, Kitwana asserts that the Hip Hop generation is comprised of those born between 1965 and 1984 that identify with the language, culture, and music associated with Hip Hop. For practical purposes, this periodization works, but those born before 1965 and after 1984 who embrace Hip Hop cannot be excluded.

within black working-class culture and agency.¹⁶ Both Rose and Kelley laid the foundation as to how Hip Hop would be written as scholars further engage the political, social, and cultural aspects of Hip Hop music and culture.

In recent years, more historical studies on the Hip Hop of the early 1990s to emerge. Journalist Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation* proffers an oral and narrative history. A number of other works have also emerged providing the historical underpinnings for the scholarly study of Hip Hop. David Toop's *Rap Attack 3* is a revised edition of *Rap Attacks 1 and 2*. Toop's account is one of the earliest analyses of Hip Hop outlining Hip Hop history through his own personal interviews and connections with early Hip Hoppers. His three volumes give a wistful account of 1970s and 1980s Hip Hop, but is limited in terms of historical analyses and the interpretive depth and breadth of Rose and Kelley.¹⁷

Oral history provided a means in the beginning to historicize Hip Hop. Alan Ogg's *The Hip Hop Years: A History of Rap* is a collection of personal interviews that proffer a narrative history of Hip Hop practitioners. James G. Spady's *Twisted Tales: In the Hip Hop Streets of Philly* is a collection oral histories and interviews with Hip Hoppers that are direct explanations from influential individuals who have impacted and been impacted by Hip Hop. The significance of Spady's work is that it provided archival material during the early years when there was limited documentation other primary sources on Hip Hop. Jim Fricke and Charlie Ahearn's *Yes, Yes, Y'all: The Experience Music Project Oral History of Hip Hop's First Decade*

¹⁶ Ibid, 190-191; Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Ibid, 191; Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005); David Toop, *Rap Attack 3: African Rap to Global Hip Hop* (London: Serpent Tale, 4 Blackstock Mews, 2000).

gives firsthand accounts with Hip Hop pioneers along with visual imagery through photographs from the early Hip Hop era, necessary primary source material for Hip Hop scholars.¹⁸

Charise Cheney's *Brothers Gonna Work it Out: Sexual Politics in the Golden Age of Rap Nationalism* grapples with issues centered the association between performers, their art, and consumers behavior while trying to understand how these dynamics artists' expectation, motivations, and political sentiments. Through Gramscian organic intellectual tradition, Cheney weds rap and politics by framing her argument in terms of rap nationalist and raptivist (an amalgam of the words rapper and activist). With this, she excavates "raptivism" within black popular culture and political culture. While she represents these raptivists as characters from the Gramscian organic intellectual tradition, she engages in the work of speaking truth to power. One particular note is that Cheney realizes her limits in this argument, writing that the inclusion of all rap music under the banner of political "dilutes rap music's significance as a mode of black cultural expression...and undermines the social authority of those artists whose lyrics explicitly and mindfully engage the issue of black liberation."¹⁹

This dissertation will fit into these different historiographies hoping to expand our understanding of Atlanta by utilizing and challenging some of the tensions and trends that are grounded in historical studies and will lead the way to establishing Black New South Studies, an interdisciplinary field that will help us better understand the black American South in a post-Civil Rights context. *The Dawning of the Black New South* will add to the new African American urban historiography because it moves away from the urban north and Midwest, and it

¹⁸ Ibid, 191; Alan Ogg and David Upshal, *The Hip Hop Years: A History of Rap* (New York: Fromm International, 1999); James G. Spady, *Twisted Tales: In the Hip Hop Streets of Philly* (Philadelphia, PA: UMUM/LOH Publishers, 1995); Jim Frick and Charlie Ahearn, eds., *Yes, Yes, Y'all: The Experience Music Project Oral History of Hip Hop's First Decade* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2002).

¹⁹ Tami Navarro, "Book Review—Brothers Gonna Work it Out," *New Black Magazine* 28 April 2006; Charise L. Cheney, *Brothers Gonna Work it Out: Sexual Politics in the Golden Age of Rap Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 7.

will tease out those tensions of black masses juxtaposed with black elites. It is also necessary to look at the culture of Atlanta in a post-Civil Rights context by understanding urban renewal, black electoral politics, the olympification of Atlanta and the City's popular culture.

This dissertation contributes to historiography of African American folk culture and resistance because, in many ways, one can examine "Dirty South Hip Hop" as a genre of folk culture that is reflective of the social thought of Atlanta's black working class. This analysis will require a deep interpretive investigation on the multiple meanings, functions and ambiguities of the rap music. With this, the musical content will serve as an archive in some regards. As those African American folk historical and cultural scholars have done before me, it is my goal to serve as an interpreter of the multiple meanings, functions and ambiguities of this recent form of black southern folk culture.

Lastly, this dissertation will southernize the historiography of Hip Hop by focusing on the urban South. As mentioned in the historiography, much of the scholarship in Hip Hop studies has centered on New York and other east coast cities such as Philadelphia. Yet, the experiences of southern blacks provide a different purview than their east coast kith and kin. This shift does not discount New York's role in rap and Hip Hop culture, but merely diversifies the characters that embody Hip Hop. Most aspects of African American popular culture (e.g. folklore, blues, gospel, jazz, etc.) have moved from the black South to the urban north, Midwest and west coast, but Hip Hop is the first genre that was created in urban north and found its way into the rural and urban South.

Also, this dissertation's utilization of rap music and Hip Hop culture show the particulars of how the development of a genre of music and culture is indicative to the development or underdevelopment of the communities from which artists hail. This investigates the impact of

racial uplift theory, urban regime theory, political economy, neo-liberalism and culture of poverty on public policy which can be spewed and accessed critically by citizens. The significance of using popular culture in this dissertation provides an interesting scope to the emerging trends and tensions that are particular to a particular space. This Hip Hop spoke in terms that countered Atlanta's notoriety and asserted the realities of the city's development and its influence on the music.

Because Atlanta emerged as the unofficial capitol and most notable international city of the Black New South, it holds a place of significance among all southerners. Atlanta is a crossroads where rural and urban, southern and northern, eastern and western, and national and international people and cultures come together. Atlanta's interesting story creates space for a new paradigm in the academic research being cultivated that will guide future research and scholarship. Black New South Studies is an emerging field that, in many ways, will function in a similar fashion to African American Studies. However, its rigorous research and scholarship will focus on the experiences of African Americans and in the post-Civil Rights South era. This interdisciplinary field investigates and challenges tensions and trends that have often been overlooked by scholars studying African Americans, seeking to analyze and explicate national and international implications centered on history, urban and rural popular culture, education, electoral politics, land ownership, health disparities, sociology, psychology, religion and spirituality, and business just to name a few.

PROLOGUE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BLACK ATLANTA BEFORE 1966

Operatin' under the crooked American system too long. OutKast, pronounced out cast, an adjective meaning homeless or unaccepted in society, but let's look deeper than that. Are you an OutKast? If you understand and feel the basic principles and fundamental truths contained within this music, you probably are. If you think it's all about pimpin' hoes and slammin' Cadillac do's, you probably a cracker, or a nigga that think he a cracker, or maybe just don't understand. An OutKast is someone who is not considered to be part of the normal world. He's looked at differently. He is not accepted because of his clothes, his hair, his occupation, his beliefs or his skin color. Now look at yourself, are you an OutKast? I know I am. As a matter of fact, fuck being anythang else. It's only so much time left in this crazy world. Wake up niggaz and realize what's goin' on around you. Poisonin' of the food and water, tamperin' of cigarettes, disease engineering control over your life. Take back your existence or die like a punk. This is Big Rube, sayin' right on to the real, and death to the fakers. Peace out.²⁰

In 1993 when Dungeon Family member and poet Big Rube blatantly soliloquized the conditions of the black working poor and homeless of Atlanta, Georgia, it marked a major shift in American popular culture. Atlanta, Georgia, an American southern city, had now moved to the American mainstream. Audiences knew that there was a different message to be gleaned from this soliloquy. Big Rube's raspy voice and black Georgian parlance signified that Atlanta now held the status of a city whose downtrodden had a new voice, hence his soliloquy.

Since the Emancipation Proclamation, Atlanta, Georgia boasted a history where African Americans thrived through the establishment of black owned businesses and a considerable system of black education. Yet, in this soliloquy, Big Rube drew attention to those excluded from Atlanta's black bourgeoisie²¹ and challenged the idea that Atlanta was the best city for all African Americans. He did not contradict Atlanta's image as black Mecca with a burgeoning and vibrant black middle class. Rather, he challenged the view of Atlanta as a city of progress

²⁰ OutKast, "Tru Dat," *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik LP*, La Face Records, 1993.

²¹ E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie: The Book that Brought the Shock and Self-Revelation to Middle-Class Blacks in America* Reprint (New York: Free Press, 1990). The term black bourgeoisie coined by E. Franklin Frazier is altogether different than that of black elites, the black intelligentsia or the black middle class. It refers to black capitalists or those African Americans whose affluence and status allowed them to advance political programs that expressed their sentiments even through Jim Crow. With this, the black bourgeoisie centered its politics particular economic, social and political interests.

for a black community. This prologue seeks to explicate and analyze trends and tensions seen in Atlanta after the Civil War that influences the historical, cultural, economical, political and cultural aspects of post-Civil Rights Black Atlanta, Georgia.

Contending New Souths

Atlanta: the phoenix which rose from its ashes, without bitterness or rancor, to welcome modernity of Northern money, and yet to coming bustle and growth with the grace and comfort of a Southern past; a city “too busy to hate,” ready to set aside the uglier aspect of a bad social system and move on to newer ways; a boom city where business and government work together; the Forward-Looking Southern City ready to be a national city.²²

On December 22, 1886, Henry Grady, managing editor for the *Atlanta Constitution* and member of the Atlanta Ring of Democratic Leaders, spoke before the New England Society of New York. His speech detailed the coming of a “New South,” in which he advocated industrial development as a solution to the postwar South’s economic and social troubles. As such, Grady turned his attention toward promoting Atlanta, Georgia’s, economic development potential. Though this idea was not original with Grady, his advocacy of unity and trust between the North and South spurred northern investments in Atlanta’s industries.

²² Reese Cleghorn, “The Death of a Myth,” *Atlanta Magazine*, December 1968: 24. In many myths and legends, the Phoenix symbolized rebirth. At its death, it went to the City of Heliopolis in Egypt, settled into its nest and took one last look at the world around it, immolated itself, and rose from the ashes renewed and young. This myth emphasized the afterlife, survival and strength in modern culture and literature. According to other legends, it also had regenerating capabilities, which made it almost immortal. The Phoenix was universally considered a champion of good, and a truly magical creature. They were generally reclusive, but occasionally worked with honorable wizards and magicians for some greater good. The Phoenix abhorred evil, and did not associate with any entity without honor and goodness. The Phoenix did not actively seek out evil to destroy, but would not pass up the opportunity to destroy evil when it presented itself. It was always the symbol for creation from destruction, in spite of differences in beliefs or ideology. It was believed to possess the ability to heal itself of any hurt or wound inflicted by an enemy.

Grady's New South idea was not received or seen as progressive by all. To southern whites, Grady's New South ideology disheartened southern farmers at the behest of northern interests. Farmers ignored Grady's advice to raise crops with cotton for additional revenue and higher cotton prices. Grady struggled greatly to portray good race relations for northerners interested in southern industrial investments, but troubled by the South's oppressive and violent racial order. In numerous editorials, Grady purported that blacks enjoyed "fair treatment" in Georgia and throughout the South. This discourse pleased white southern readers as few northern investors looked past the South's record of black disenfranchisement, exploitation, and violence. More importantly, Grady's New South paradigm represented a faithful adjustment of Old South traditions to New South conditions. His attempts to affix northern interest to Atlanta were cut short with his untimely death in 1889. Yet, his influence as the spokesman of the New South was extensive, providing both the ideological framework that centered Atlanta as the burgeoning symbol of the New South.²³

For black southerners, Grady's New South idea was in part, an attempt to revise the Old South's hegemonic order of white supremacy. The failure of the New South proponents to denounce the blatant racial oppression of the late nineteenth Century reminded southern blacks of an experience least removed from slavery. Still, Atlanta was different with a diverse and resilient black community. If there was anything that sets Atlanta's African American community apart from other southern cities, it was a select few that were able to achieve positions of political and economic power far beyond the most imaginable expectations of the black masses in the rest of the South. But for the rank and file of blacks in Atlanta, life was marked by the prevailing notions of American racism and white supremacy that left black Atlantans, in the main, at the bottom of the economic, political and social life of the city. There was no firm basis to the popular myth that white Atlantans, through their charity and kindness, were the foundation of Black progress. Most of Atlanta's affluent African Americans fought their way off the bottom rung under their own brawn, although there had been steadfast and significant support from a small segment of the white

²³ New Georgia Encyclopaedia, s.v. "Grady, Henry W.," <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2451> (accessed 21 March 2008); Harold E. Davis, *Henry Grady's New South: Atlanta, A Brave Beautiful City* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990); Joel Chandler Harris, *Joel Chandler Harris's Life of Henry W. Grady Including His Writings and Speeches* (New York: Cassell, 1890); Raymond B. Nixon, *Henry W. Grady: Spokesman of the New South* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1943); Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Case in Southern Mythmaking*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970).

population in the city. Blacks in Atlanta flourished because the community as a whole educated themselves and carved a place in the business life of the city. They built a black educational juggernaut that came to be a center for black education, not only in Georgia and the nation, but in the entire world.

In 1968 as the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders Report was released, a team of journalists were assembled from the *Atlanta Journal* to better understand how the Kerner Report applied to Atlanta. These journalists produced “The Two Atlantas,” a six week series that examined the delineation of race in post-Civil Rights Atlanta. The “Two Atlantas” The first article of the series entitled “Negro History in Atlanta,” provides context to black life and history in black Atlanta. According to the article, the 1850 U.S. census indicated that Atlanta had a total white population of 2,058 and 511 blacks, 493 bondsmen and 18 free blacks.²⁴ After the Civil War, a great influx of African Americans came into the City. The article notes that during the 1850s, white merchants and “mechanic” were startled with the number of free blacks, primarily of mixed heritage, who worked as dentists, barbers, and blacksmiths and mentions City council minutes from the era that show white Atlantans protest to the City government over competition from free blacks. The article points to Roderick Badger, a free black, who as early as 1859 was the target of protests by white tradesmen who filed a complaint with the City council for “tolerating the black man” in Atlanta. Badger remained in Atlanta and became one of the city’s most prominent dentists with a large white clientele.²⁵

According to the “Two Atlantas” Team report, slaves were still bought and sold in Atlanta during the Civil War. Most strikingly, they uncovered advertisements from a local newspaper showing slave traders still in business as late as May 1864—approximately 15

²⁴ Census Data from 1790 to 1960 can now be obtained on line at: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census>; Negro History in Atlanta, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, 3. *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU.

²⁵ Ibid.

months after Abraham Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation in January of 1863. During the siege of Atlanta, blacks were forced to work on construction gangs that built breastworks and parapets. There seemed to be little fear among masters that the City's slaves would revolt, and, in fact, Atlanta's slaves worked for their masters, deserting them only when federal troops entered the city. Since slavery, the basis of the southern economy, was destroyed during the war, the economic ruin of the rural areas, which followed in the wake of the war, spawned a great migration by blacks to Atlanta. They took up residence in the areas along the railroad tracks known as the bottoms, a name that signaled the location's poor living conditions and structures of despair. Most freed men and women could not find work in the city's textile industry and poor whites held deep resentment toward them because of the already bankrupt market. Evidence of this can be seen in the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill strike in 1897.²⁶

Black determination to find work intensified hostility and fears among poor white Atlantans. More industrious blacks were able to gain entrance to professional work places as barbers, mechanics, dentists, drug salesmen, and doctors. Of the most successful of these was Alonzo Herndon, founder of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. Herndon was born into slavery and came to Atlanta from Social Circle, Georgia in 1876. Upon arriving in the City, he

²⁶ Negro History in Atlanta, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal, Newsweek Inc.* Collection, 3, box 1, folders 7-11, EU, MARBL. Statistics show that approximately 500,000 bondsmen were set free in the South, a cost of \$272 million lost by whites overnight. Also see Philip Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York, International Publishers 1947), 210. This account asserts that blacks did not obtain widespread employment in the textile mills despite the fact that textile manufacturing in the South underwent great advances. White mill workers flatly refused to work alongside blacks and spawned the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill strike in Atlanta, described by the *Atlanta Constitution* as a spontaneous protest against the employment of twenty Negro women spinners, who worked alongside white women.

opened a barbershop in the Markham House and by 1908, had accumulated property valued at \$80,000.²⁷

Shortly after the Civil War and with the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, Atlanta's City Council implemented due process by passing ordinances that made blacks subject to the same laws as whites and repealing discriminatory laws against blacks. Blacks also attained suffrage. Duly noted is that white Atlantans overwhelmingly opposed this legislation. In 1871, William Finch and George Graham became the first blacks to be elected to the Atlanta City Council. Finch was particularly influential in the city, and worked tirelessly for free education for black children.²⁸

It was during the Reconstruction era years that blacks in Atlanta were able to make the greatest strides in education, particularly in higher education. Atlanta University was founded in 1865; Morehouse College, then in Augusta, but soon moved to Atlanta, opened its doors in 1867; Clark College was founded in 1869. Subsequent black institutions founded after Reconstruction were Spelman College and Morris Brown College founded in 1881 and the Gammon Theological Seminary founded in 1886. No force in the city had more political, social, cultural and historical significance for blacks than the founding of these institutions of higher education. According to sociologist Joseph Jewell, as early as 1865, James Tate and Granithan Daniels, both former slaves, opened the first public school in Atlanta for black children on Gilmer Street. It later became the Storrs School headed by the American Missionary Association. Blacks who had also been quasi-members of white churches in slavery founded their own churches during

²⁷ Negro History in Atlanta, 3. See also Carole Merritt, *The Herndons: An Atlanta Family* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002); Alexa Benson Henderson, *Atlanta Life Insurance Company: Guardian of Black Economic Dignity* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990).

²⁸ Negro History in Atlanta, 3.

Reconstruction. In time, these churches would furnish some of the most remarkable black leaders known in the era. Also during Reconstruction blacks were elected to the state legislature and helped write the Georgia Constitution of 1868. This caused more resentment between blacks and whites as there were difficulties for black politicians to obtain political power and provide effective leadership. This, along with the lack of support from fellow white Republicans as well as the unrelenting efforts of white Democrats to regain control, undermined black political gains.²⁹

By 1872, whites were back in control of the state government. In the 1880s, a series of decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court as seen in the *U.S. v. Reese* and *U.S. v. Cruikshank* decisions, both made in 1876, flattened almost all of the social gains made by blacks since 1865.³⁰ Education provided an interesting view of these sentiments. According to historian June Patton, because there were no public state supported institution of higher learning for blacks as mandated for black education under the Morrill Act, an \$8,000 grant was allotted to Atlanta University. Simultaneously, Georgia State school commissioner Orr argued that college

²⁹ Ibid, See also Joseph O. Jewell, "Black Ivy: The American Missionary Association and the Black Upper Class in Atlanta, Georgia, 1875-1915." (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1998), see chapter entitled "Black Ivy; Missionary Education and Atlanta's Black Upper Class."

³⁰ Negro History in Atlanta, 3. See also Edmund Drago, *Black Politicians and Reconstruction in Georgia: A Splendid Failure* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); In *U.S. v. Reese*, 92 U.S. 214 (1876), the Court struck down the Enforcement Act of 1870 because one of its sections permitted federal prosecution for refusal to accept votes without limiting the offense to denials based on race or prior condition of slavery; In *U.S. v. Cruikshank*, 92 U.S. 542 (1875), the Court did not incorporate the Bill of Rights to the states and found that the First Amendment right to assembly "was not intended to limit the powers of the State governments in respect to their own citizens" and that the Second Amendment "has no other effect than to restrict the powers of the national government." *Reese* and *Cruikshank* enabled the southern states to deny the vote to blacks on seemingly nonracial grounds, such as literacy, and thus was the foundation for later black disfranchisement.

education for blacks was far in advance of the demands of the present condition of black society and thus delighted in his refusal to fund public education for black students.³¹

As the quality of black life continued to decline, Atlanta business and industrial might embodied the “coming of the New South” for whites. In 1895, as a sign of her progress, Atlanta hosted the Cotton States and International Exposition, a publicity laden fair that celebrated the progress of the South since the Civil War as well as the redemption of white control over blacks. The fair, held in Piedmont Park, was also the site where Booker T. Washington delivered his “Atlanta Compromise” speech. Washington advised blacks in the South to concentrate on vocational training and not attempt to mix socially with whites. He connected the interests of African Americans with the prosperity of the region and proposed that blacks focus on businesses where he believed them to have more prospect in the South than the North. The speech was purported as a major sensation by the mainstream press. However, for blacks, Washington had dealt a deafening blow. For more than two decades, he casted a long shadow over development in the South. He did so, however, over criticism of other black leaders such as W.E. B. Du Bois, a professor at Atlanta University, who had founded a center to examine social aspects of black life in American in 1896.³²

The violence and terror against blacks during Reconstruction was still as profound at the turn of the 20th Century. According to the “*Two Atlanta’s*” Writing Team, between the years of 1888 to 1903, 241 African Americans were lynched in Georgia, which made it second only to Mississippi [294] in that time period.³³ Yet in the midst of hostility, Atlanta’s black community

³¹ June Patton, *Major Richard Robert Wright Sr. and Black Higher Education in Georgia, 1880-1920*, (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago, 1980), see chapter entitled “The Politics of Education: The Struggle for Georgia’s First Black State Supported College.”

³² Negro History in Atlanta, 3.

³³ Project HAL: The Historical American Lynching Data Collection Project obtained at <http://people.uncw.edu/hinese/HAL/HAL%20Web%20Page.htm> (accessed March 28, 2008).

established businesses that served black clientele. By 1900, blacks in Georgia had amassed assets valued at around \$14 million in property, much of which was in Atlanta. This gave way to the beginnings of several black owned, operated, and secure firms served Atlanta's black community over the next two decades. Of these businesses, Alonzo Herndon's Atlanta Life Insurance founded in 1905; the Atlanta Savings Bank founded in 1909; and the Citizens Trust Company founded in 1921 were most significant within black America.³⁴

At the dawning of the 20th Century, much of Atlanta's black community watched in horror as the city stood at the center of and bore witness to a national trend of race hate and terror. White supremacy at its best coupled with racial hostility as a result of loss at the behest of the Civil War and Reconstruction era spawned legislation designed to impede black progress. On September 22, 1906, racial hostility reached a fever's pitch and birthed the Atlanta Race Riot, a four-day nightmare where shooting, stabbing, and dragging blacks from vehicles as well looting and burning black neighborhoods ravaged Atlanta's black community. By the end of the riot, twenty-five blacks and two white were killed, and least 70 blacks were injured.³⁵

In 1908, Georgia's Governor Hoke Smith fulfilled a campaign promise by passing laws that deprived blacks from voting in the primary election. These laws effectively disfranchised blacks. By 1913, state laws required segregation in almost every aspect of public life and death, as the new mandated racially laws segregated cemeteries. As acts of racism continued to rise in the early 20th century, what became clear was that in America in general, and Georgia in particular, patriotism towards America pushed blacks to defend this racist regime to show

³⁴ Negro History in Atlanta, 3.

³⁵ Gregory Mixon, *The Atlanta Riot: Race, Class, and Violence in a New South City*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

themselves as citizenship worthy, seeking inclusion with the same sense as whites. Of the first seven Atlantans called to serve in World War I, two were blacks.³⁶ The fact that Blacks were willing to fight for this nation

As Atlanta's white community burgeoned into the celebrated capital of the New South, little had changed since Reconstruction for the ordinary black men and women. Black migration into Atlanta during the early decades of the 20th century was indicative of the farm-to-city trend seen nationwide. From 1900 to 1920, the black population in Atlanta grew from 35,727 to 67,796 and the white population increased from 54,090 to 137,785. By 1930, with the beginning of the depression and decimation of the cotton crops by the boll weevil, there were 90,075 blacks and 180,247 white inside the city's limits.³⁷ Black sharecroppers came to the city from rural areas to avoid starvation and homelessness. Sharecropping plantations with little cotton production called for the eviction of black workers by white plantation owners. A large segment of both populations were poor and lacked formal education. Whites arriving from farms had little more than blacks, but nonetheless the color of their skin in Jim Crow Atlanta enabled greater social mobility and a wider range of opportunities than blacks in the city. Whites could take residence in all parts of the city whereas blacks were forced by law and custom to reside in the "black areas of town." The railroad lines from Atlanta's origins as a railroad hub determined the residential patterns of the city. Whites did not like the property along the rail lines and as a result, blacks ended up residing in and around this area.

Despite white terror, racism and poverty, there were glimmers of hope and accomplishment within Atlanta's black communities. In 1922, the first segregated municipal swimming pool for blacks was built at Washington Park on the West Side of Atlanta. Since

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ U.S. Census from the years of 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

blacks were still able to vote in general elections, they were able through a school board election to attain the first black public secondary school, Booker T. Washington in 1924. In 1926, Leo “Tiger” Flowers of Atlanta became the first African American to hold the middleweight boxing championship of the world. The *Atlanta Daily World* was founded in 1928 and by 1932 it was the only daily black newspaper in the nation. Also, in 1932, the Atlanta Negro Chamber of Commerce was formed. Yet throughout, the most significant accomplishment for black Atlanta was the colleges that made up the Atlanta University Complex.³⁸

With Du Bois’ research and teaching, Atlanta University became the only university in the world committed to a scientific study of black life. Du Bois stated "without undue boasting that between 1896 and 1920 there was no study of race problems in America which did not depend in some degree upon the investigations made at Atlanta University."³⁹ Yet the most meaningful contribution of Atlanta University was the preparation of highly qualified leaders, businessmen, and educators it sent to Atlanta’s black communities. Teachers were plentiful. Children of Atlanta’s struggling professionals returned to their community and built family interests. Atlanta was one of the most successful black business communities in the nation, resulting in a powerful black economic bloc with effective capital and savoir-faire that many thought would lead the way for the masses. Further, one of the first interracial committees organized in the South and one of the first in the nation was born through the influence of the university in 1918. Initially name the Committee on Interracial Cooperation, this organization became the Southern Regional Council in 1944.⁴⁰

³⁸ Negro History in Atlanta. 5.

³⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois, A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life From the Last Decade of its First Century* (New York, International Publishers, 1968), 210.

⁴⁰ Negro History in Atlanta, 6.

The glimmer of hope continued. In 1946, Primeus King, an African American from Columbus, Georgia, challenged the white Democratic primary in the U.S. Supreme Court and brought forth a new era for black Atlantans. The court ruled the white primary illegal, and Atlanta's black community of 100,000 found themselves suddenly with a powerful, even decisive, political voice in the affairs of the city. In 1948, Atlanta Police Chief Herbert Jenkins answering a plea from black leadership and defying white public sentiment and hired six black policemen. By 1949, African Americans represented at least 25 percent of Atlanta's registered voters. In July of that same year, the Atlanta Negro Voters League, a bipartisan political organization was founded by black leaders at the Butler Street YMCA and served as a clearinghouse for black problems and as broker for the African American vote until the early 1960s.⁴¹ In the early 1950s, a group of black ministers ended segregation on public transportation by refusing to sit at the back of the bus. In 1954, Dr. Rufus Clement, the president of Atlanta University, became the first African American ever to win a city-wide election gaining a seat on the Atlanta school board. In 1965, Q.V. Williamson was elected to the board of alderman, being the first African American to hold this position since Reconstruction. The early 1960s saw the removal of "white" and "colored" signs from public areas. A series of sit-ins resulted in the desegregation of public accommodations in Atlanta though not without violent reactions from whites. One of the most meaningful episodes in the city's history came in 1965 when native son, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., won the Nobel Peace Prize and was honored.

⁴¹ Duly noted, the Atlanta Negro Voters League was organized in a spirit of bipartisanship, the ANVL created dual chairs to ensure equality between the two political parties. John Wesley Dobbs, retired postal employee and leader of the Prince Hall Masons of Georgia and the Fulton County Republican Club, and attorney A. T. Walden, president of the Atlanta branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and leader of the Fulton County Citizens Democratic Club, served as the first co-chairs of the executive committee. The chairs appointed all committees as well as the twenty-five members of the executive committee, which served as the policymaking board of the organization. The general committee was composed of prominent black civic, religious, and business leaders.

During the three decades that wrought change, Atlanta found itself with two successive mayors who demonstrated an ability to hold the support of the black community while placating whites. Mayor William Hartsfield and Ivan Allen attributed this purported harmonious racial spirit to effective black leadership combined with the vision of a “city too busy to hate” coined by their own administrations. Also, blacks attributed much to Governor Ellis Arnall who, in 1946, took the most courageous stand when he vowed to enforce the Supreme Court ruling that outlawed the white primary. Arnall refused to placate the white sentiment of neighboring southern states eager to disfranchise the black vote in the 1940s. However, a deeper investigation of the “City Too Busy to Hate” image reveals a reality of deep divisions and entrenched racial hostility.

Understanding the “City Too Busy to Hate” slogan requires a deeper investigation that unpacks the reality of the message. When the Supreme Court decision of 1954 outlawed racial segregation in the nation’s schools, Georgia law makers, seeking to avoid the repercussions of maintaining a dual educational system, sought sanctuary in the “private school plan,” which threatened that any school system attempting to integrate would be denied state funds and thus closed. However, in 1956, and for the first time in nearly a century, Georgia resurrected the confederate symbol by changing its state flag in symbolic opposition to *Brown v. Board of Education*.⁴² The first case in Georgia filed, under the auspices of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), came against the Atlanta Board of Education in

⁴² James Forman Jr., “Driving Dixie Down: Removing the Confederate Flag from Southern State Capitols,” *Yale Law Journal*, 101, 2 (Nov 1991): 505; Also see Jim Auchmuty, “Unraveling the Flag: A Guide to Rebel Colors,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 29 September 1991 and Marshall Ingewerson, “Rebel Flag Won’t Come Down,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 March 1987. Senator Jefferson Lee Davis was among the drafters of the bill. The Flag Facts Committee, *Georgia Flag Facts*(1990). The Georgia state flag is a replica of the Confederate flag, with the state seal imposed upon the left-most third. Acts and resolutions of the General Assembly of Georgia, No. 29, 1 General Acts and Resolutions 38 (1956). In introducing the bill to change the Georgia state flag, Representative Denmark Groover indicated that “this will show that we in Georgia intend to uphold what we stood for, will stand for, and will fight for.

1958. The plaintiffs won their case, and the Board was ordered to submit plans to desegregate by December 1959. The plans were to become effective in 1960.⁴³

In the meantime, a small number of Atlanta citizens became conscious of the struggles taking place in Virginia and Little Rock and were concerned about the problems faced by their own schools. Consequently, they began to provoke public discussions on methods of keeping public schools open. Regardless of the disengagement of the local power structure and the unyielding state political leadership, these citizens, bolstered by Ralph McGill, the anti-segregationist editor for the *Atlanta Constitution*, encouraged others to take a stand. The white parents of Atlanta's youth organized HOPE, Inc. (Help Our Public Education) and soon became the "rallying ground for moderates" previously hesitant to speak out. White Atlantans' resistance to moderates was articulated by MASE (Metropolitan Association for Segregated Education) and GUTS (Georgians Unwilling to Surrender) created by Lester Maddox, who later became governor of the state of Georgia.⁴⁴ During the 1960 General Assembly, there was a movement to retain massive resistance laws; however, committees were created that held state-wide hearings and recommended possible revisions of Georgia Law for the next General Assembly. For example, the Sibley Committee suggested "a course designed to keep the schools open with as much freedom of choice to each parent and community as possible." The massive resistance laws were repealed and the "freedom of choice" plan was reluctantly approved by the 1961 legislature. Atlanta was able to follow the Court's order to desegregate the eleventh and twelfth grades beginning with the 1961 school year.⁴⁵

⁴³ Virginia H. Hein, "The Image of 'A City Too Busy to Hate': Atlanta in the 1960s," *Phylon* 33, no. 3, (1972): 205; *Calhoun v. Member of Board of Education, City of Atlanta*, Georgia, 188 F. Supp. 401 (1959).

⁴⁴ Hein, 205; *Background Atlanta: A Handbook for Reporters Covering Desegregation of Atlanta Public Schools* (Atlanta: Organizations Assisting Schools in September, 1961), 7-8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Embarrassed by racist reactions toward desegregation by white southerners in Little Rock in 1957 and New Orleans in 1960, Hein contends that Atlanta Public Schools transitioned with dignity partly because of the group called the Organizations Assisting Schools in September (OASIS), a fifty-three member alliance comprised of religious, civic and service groups and agencies. OASIS reached hundreds of thousands of Atlantans through town hall meetings and speeches. Hein notes that fearful of unrest, the Chamber of Commerce ran a full-page advertisement in the *Atlanta Constitution* and the *Atlanta Journal* that asked, “How Great is Atlanta?” with implications that unrest would damage the city’s reputation while the world watched.⁴⁶

According to Hein, another measure in Atlanta Public School’s desegregation transition was Ralph McGill, the white liberal editor for the *Atlanta Constitution*. On the eve of August 30, 1961, the first day of school, members of the press and other news media poured into Atlanta to cover desegregation. Ralph McGill commented that the city that “has always tried to look forward not backwards” was ready for the world’s attention. Hein notes that each member of the press was given a handbook entitled *Background: Atlanta*, prepared by OASIS “for reporters covering desegregation of Atlanta Public Schools.” It provided facts about those involved, including the ten selected black students, public officials and organization leaders. It also included statements from Mayor William Hartsfield, Police Chief Herbert Jenkins, School Superintendent John Letson and others, all stressing Atlanta’s determination to obey the law peacefully. The media were impressed considering the harassment endured from city officials and angry whites in Little Rock and New Orleans. According to *Newsweek*, “Atlanta was anxious to cater to the working press.” What was increasingly clear was Atlanta’s calculated

⁴⁶ Hein, 206.

approach to desegregation, which took two years of preparation. Mayor William Hartsfield warned, “What happened in Little Rock won’t happen here. We’re going to ride herd on these damn rabble-rousers. We have a loyal police chief...who knows more about the race problem than any chief in the nation...We’ve had men from our force in Little Rock and New Orleans studying what they did wrong.... when racists come in this town, they know they’re going to get their heads knocked together.”⁴⁷ On August 30, 1961, four Atlanta high schools were quietly integrated. The success of peaceful desegregation combined with the confident words of Mayor Hartsfield was the beginning of Atlanta’s reputation as a “city too busy to hate.”⁴⁸

Hein notes that in his press conference held on August 30, 1961, President John F. Kennedy applauded Atlanta “for the responsible law-abiding manner” displayed. Media coverage and publicity from numerous sources, including the *New York Times*, praised Atlanta for providing “a new and shining example of what can be accomplished...[by] people of good will and intelligence.” *Life Magazine* gave special coverage and commendation to the Atlanta Police Department; and *Look Magazine* called Atlanta “the leader of the New South.”⁴⁹

Hein contends that Atlanta’s image of progressive race relations was helped by racists’ outbursts in surrounding counties and southern states. Ralph McGill was credited with packaging Atlanta differently while critically assessing “bloody and murderous mob attacks” in the *Atlanta Constitution*. As such, Attorney General Robert Kennedy cited Atlanta as the epitome of a city where law and order were more important than prejudice, attributing much of Atlanta’s success to Ralph McGill. It was clear that McGill’s influence not only affected local

⁴⁷ Hein, 207.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

attitudes, but also national attitudes through his syndicated column, which appeared in more than a hundred American newspapers. This, in turn enhanced an already positive image of Atlanta.⁵⁰

Nonetheless, according to Hein, Atlanta's racial picture was less than idyllic from within. In 1963, Ivan Allen Jr. was the only southern mayor to speak before Congress on behalf of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964, which ended discrimination in public accommodations and implied that the business community had an important role in arranging partial desegregation of public facilities in Atlanta before such action was required by law. In 1967, Chief Herman Jenkins was the nation's only Chief of Police to serve on the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which later produced the Kerner Report.⁵¹

According to Hein, in the mid 1960's it was believed that "Forward Atlanta," a business plan conceived by businessmen for the business community, was at the center of Atlanta's stellar image. Atlanta became one of the most well-advertised cities in the nation with new construction, a cultural boom, and professional sports. The mid to late 1960s welcomed three sports franchises: the Atlanta Braves and the Atlanta Falcons in 1966; and the Atlanta Hawks in 1968. In 1969, a thirty-four page spread on Atlanta through *National Geographic* stated that "golden prosperity is....upon the city. New jobs created since 1961 number nearly 160,000 for a gain of 43 percent, a sharper climb than any other major U.S. metropolitan area." In 1966, Atlanta had the nation's lowest unemployment ratio (1.9 percent). The city led all other metropolitan areas in percentage gains in wholesale sales, and, in five years, it moved up from twenty-first in the nation in housing starts to eighth. Of the nation's five hundred biggest industrial corporations, four hundred maintained operations in Atlanta. The fact that one

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Bruce Galphin, "Atlanta: A New Kind of City," *Atlanta Magazine*, June 1967, 28.

hundred and thirty delegations from other cities and states visited Atlanta to study its development was evidence in itself of an excellent national image in 1969.⁵²

However, the aforementioned depiction of Atlanta mainly reflected the condition of its white citizens. To black Atlanta, the ‘city too busy to hate’ was a fabrication. They viewed the popular image of Atlanta as synonymous with white Atlanta, both nationally and locally, while Atlanta’s black community was altogether different and often referred to as a separate and distinct community.

In his twenty-four year tenure as Mayor of Atlanta, William Hartsfield’s support came from four main sources: business leaders, most of the alderman and city officials, middle and upper-income whites and, increasingly over the years, blacks. This support was harnessed because Hartsfield developed an alliance between Atlanta business and civic leaders, black leaders, and his administration. Black voting strength increased with time. Once, black leaders approached Hartsfield demanding lighting on black streets; Hartsfield said that he would take action if they returned with 10,000 votes. They returned with the signatures and Hartsfield delivered on the streetlights. In 1952, Hartsfield established the first interracial committee in Atlanta to bring about a better understanding of the problems of black expansion, to stabilize some white neighborhoods adjacent to black areas, and in other neighborhoods, to promote a peaceable transition from white to black. Another advancement made by the city under the leadership of Hartsfield was the desegregation of Atlanta’s restaurants and lunch counters. Much of this progress was accomplished through clandestine negotiations among business leaders and

⁵² Hein, 208.

leaders of the black community following more than a year of anti-segregation protests and sit-ins by black college students, including activists such as Julian Bond and Lonnie King.⁵³

In 1961, the traditional Hartsfield voting coalition of businessmen, blacks and Northside whites elected Ivan Allen Jr. as mayor over segregationist Lester Maddox. In 1963, Allen went to Capitol Hill to solicit public accommodations, which were already in partial operation in Atlanta. Re-elected in 1965 in a landslide victory, it was revealed that Allen had received only 51 percent of the white votes.” His victory was due to the black voters. Roger Williams noted that “Negroes did not love Allen, he is after all, a patrician white southerner, but most recognize in him qualities of decency and genuine human concern—plus an overriding desire to sustain Atlanta’s national image.”⁵⁴

However, in a 1968 article in the *Atlanta Inquirer*, a columnist wrote, “Let no one mistake Black Atlantans’ pride in their city.... blacks enjoy Atlanta, but they don’t like it like it is.”⁵⁵ Other popular sentiments were more forthright: “Atlanta enjoys a reputation that it does not deserve,” or “Atlanta’s image only looks good when compared to Mississippi.”⁵⁶ Though whites and blacks in Atlanta worked together to achieve national credence, white and black Atlanta were very different. Moreover, the vast majority of whites in Atlanta were ignorant of the conditions under which most of the black community lived.⁵⁷

⁵³ Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Class Actions: The Impact of Black and Middle Class Conservatism on Civil Rights Lawyering in a New South Political Economy, Atlanta, 1946-1979*, (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2002) see chapter entitled “Colonel” A.T. Walden and the Atlanta Style of Biracial Negotiation; Virginia H. Hein, 210; Kent M. Jennings, *Community Influentials: The Elites of Atlanta* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1964), 131-32; United States Commission on Civil Rights, Report of the Commission (Washington, DC, 1959), 421; A Conversation with Ivan Allen,” *Atlanta Magazine*, January, 1969, 84.

⁵⁴ Hein, 210.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Hein, 211.

This brief and concise history of pre-Civil Rights black Atlanta provides purview and context for this dissertation that focuses on post Civil Rights black Atlanta. In the last half of the Twentieth Century, Atlanta acquired the moniker, black Mecca based on the perception that an abundance of opportunity existed for blacks with education and/or skill. However, the rank and file of black Atlanta lacked education and skill. In 1968, there were approximately 50,000 inhabitants in Atlanta's ghettoes, 32,000 Atlantans lived in public housing, and it was difficult to measure the number of homeless blacks. These statistics suggest that Atlanta was in fact, a black Mecca for some. However, this dissertation attempts to provide a counter-narrative to black Mecca image.

CHAPTER ONE

CONTENDING VISIONS OF A BLACK NEW SOUTHS AND THE BUILDING OF BLACK ATLANTA, 1865-1968

*See in the third grade this is what you were told. You were bought! You were sold!*⁵⁸
—Cool Breeze

Atlanta deserves a central place in our efforts to understand African American history and race relations in the United States. Throughout the 20th Century, Atlanta was the center of black achievement in the South as well as the nation. Much of the reputation regarding black progress was centered on the system of higher education. However, the fundamental impact of education linked to autonomous black communities, has been regarded as the most important acquisition for African Americans throughout their experience in America.

The Quest for Black Education

Educational expansion in the state of Georgia made no provisions for black higher education with the exception of the appropriation to Atlanta University, which ended in 1887.⁵⁹

This neglect was partially counterbalanced by colleges organized for black students by

⁵⁸ Goodie Mob, “Dirty South,” *Soul Food LP*, 1995.

⁵⁹ According to June Patton, in 1874, because there was no public state supported institution of higher learning for blacks, regardless of the need to make provisions for black education under the Morrill Act, an \$8000 grant was given to Atlanta University, a private historically black institution. As such, Georgia State School commissioner Gustavus Orr, argued that college education for blacks was far in advance of the demands of the present condition of black society. Moreover, advanced schooling often prepared blacks for jobs which were not open to them, therefore, Orr argued, a normal school for the training of black teachers was more necessary than a University. Georgia’s Governor, James Smith, shared Orr’s opinion as to the educational needs blacks and went on to argue that the appropriation to Atlanta University was unconstitutional because the institution was faith based and taught theology. Much of the hostility toward Atlanta University resulted from fear by whites that the school’s “Yankee” faculty was teaching northern social ideas to black students.

individuals, organizations, and various religious denominations. Atlanta's first black college was Atlanta University, founded by the American Missionary Association in 1865. The Augusta Institute founded by Richard C. Coulter and William J. White was founded in 1867, but was moved to Atlanta in 1879 and renamed the Atlanta Baptist College in 1890. In 1913, under the leadership of Dr. John Hope, the school was renamed Morehouse College in honor of Henry Morehouse.⁶⁰ In 1869, the Rev. J.W. Lee began the school that in 1877, with the aid of the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Northern Methodist church, was christened as Clark University. Two additional colleges were opened in Atlanta in 1881 when the African Methodist Episcopal church began Morris Brown College and Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles founded Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary, later named Spelman College. In 1883, the theology department of Clark University founded and organized a separate institution after receiving an endowment of \$200,000 from Elijah Gammon of Batavia, Illinois. In 1886, it became Gammon Theological Seminary. In the absence of black public high schools in Georgia, most of the students at these institutions, during their early development, were in preparatory programs. However and according to June Patton, these schools were as deserving of the title college as the University of Georgia where many students were deemed illiterate and elementary English, algebra and arithmetic were taught. As a result of these private efforts, by 1887, Atlanta had become the capital of black post-secondary education in America, and the visibility of black institutions in

⁶⁰ Henry Morehouse was a frontier pastor who later became the Corresponding Secretary and Executive Director to the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the church affiliated organization that founded Atlanta Baptist College, later named Morehouse College in honor of Morehouse. Morehouse believed that blacks would benefit from leadership and a gifted intelligentsia and gave top priority to education for blacks.

Atlanta increased opposition among whites to state appropriations for the support of public higher education for blacks.⁶¹

In 1890, the state of Georgia finally secured the funding for a public land grant institution, the Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth, located in Savannah. It became increasingly evident that the state of Georgia would only support an industrial college that would train blacks for skilled labor. The issue over black education, as far as the state of Georgia was concerned, dealt heavily with the influence of northern “Yankee” missionaries upon southern blacks. Sinister claims charged northerners with fostering jealousies and hatred towards southern whites. Whites frowned upon the practice of “social equality” between white teachers and black pupils. Yet a new showdown was emerging within the black community that pitted liberal arts education against industrial education. As seen in racial uplift theory, the notion of self-help and service to the black masses espoused by the black middle class, from which black elites and middle classes distinguished themselves from the black majority as agents of civilization, tensions between black elites, middle, working, and poor classes brewed, surrounding access to education, whether public or private. As such, black elites and middle classes were drawn to private institutions because of their wealth, the institution’s exclusivity and New England puritanical teachings, for which they felt to be more appropriate for success in a white dominated social system. What is necessary to understand is that a central assumption of racial uplift ideology was that African Americans’ material and moral progress would diminish white racism. However, in its emphasis on class distinctions and patriarchal authority, racial uplift ideology was tied to the same pejorative notions of racial pathology bestowed upon blacks by whites.

⁶¹ June Patton, *Major Richard Robert Wright Sr. and Black Higher Education in Georgia, 1880-1920*, (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1980), see chapter entitled “The Politics of Education: The Struggle for Georgia’s First Black State Supported College.”

On September 18, 1895, African American leader and educator Booker T. Washington spoke before a predominantly white crowd at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. His address would prove to be one of the most influential speeches in American history. Historian Louis Harlan asserted that although the organizers of the exposition worried that “public sentiment was not prepared for such an advanced step,” they decided that inviting a black speaker would impress Northern visitors, philanthropists, and investors with the evidence of racial progress in the South. Washington soothed his listeners’ concerns about “uppity” blacks by claiming that his race would be content with living “by the productions of our hands.”⁶²

In his address, Washington purported that blacks had gained power much too quickly during Reconstruction and should focus on being less of a force in the politics of the New South and more of an integral part of the southern economy by being better neighbors to white southerners. Washington stated:

Not only this, but the opportunity here afforded will awaken among us a new era of industrial progress. Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill; that the political convention or some teaching had more attractions than starting a dairy farm or stockyard.⁶³

Historian James Anderson’s argues that the educational philosophy initiated by Samuel Armstrong, Booker T. Washington’s mentor at Hampton Institute, prescribed industrial education as a prerequisite to a subordinate role that Armstrong believed African Americans were ordained to play in the economy of the South. Like many white southern leaders at the end of Reconstruction, Armstrong supported black disenfranchisement and anticipated African

⁶² Louis R. Harlan, ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, Vol. 3, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 583–587.

⁶³ Harlan, 583.

Americans position on the lower stratum of the South's occupational ladder. While most white southerners felt that education would ruin blacks, Anderson argues that Armstrong, unlike other southern leaders, believed in the importance of universal education. He held deep faith in the powerful capacity of moral and industrial education to socialize blacks to understand and accept their disenfranchisement and to make them more productive laborers.⁶⁴

According to Anderson, Armstrong's opinion was firmly rooted in the educational philosophy that governed Hampton Institute, where training leaders for the South's black educational system was considered a much more important goal than teaching agricultural skills. In exchange for universal schooling, Hampton's style of industrial education became part of a continuing New South ideology that sacrificed black social and political interest to the need for black workers in an economy based on agriculture. This "Hampton Model" of black industrial education was on a collision course with institutions of black higher education whose philosophy was just the opposite.⁶⁵

Historian Leroy Davis asserts that the American Missionary Association (AMA) and the American Baptist Home Missionary Society (ABHMS) as well as many black leaders and educators were apprehensive about Washington's new recognition. Weeks before Washington's speech, ABHMS and AMA leaders assembled at the annual meeting of the American Social Science Association to discuss the growing affinity to support only industrial education for blacks.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South; 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 41-42.

⁶⁵ Anderson, 34.

⁶⁶ Leroy Davis, *A Clashing of the Soul: John Hope and the Dilemma of African American Leadership and Black Higher Education in the Early Twentieth Century*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).

According to Davis, critical assessments of this trend appeared in editorials of the ABHMS journal, the *Home Mission Monthly*, and the *New York Independent* late in September and were revisited often in numerous publications from that point on. Writers argued, “Negro industrial education concept was based upon the denial of the humanity of a whole race” and was intended to make the “Negro absolutely content with his lot as a servant.” On another note, higher education, according to the missionary organization writers, rested on a belief in “thorough humanity of the black man, with divine endowment of all the facilities of the white man; capable of culture, capable of high attainments under proper conditions and with sufficient; a being not predestined to be simply a hewer of wood and drawer of water for the white race.” Henry Morehouse, the executive director of the ABHMS, believed blacks would “progress largely through the wise leadership of a gifted intelligentsia,” and gave top priority to educating the “talented tenth.” He also believed that black Progress would come through the leadership of “noble and powerful minds raised up from their own ranks.”⁶⁷ Though philanthropic northern whites conflicted with Washington’s assertions, they were unaware of the by products that would emerge within the black community. As a result, it was necessary for black educators to weigh in and counter balance the adverse side effects prescribed through northern education and puritanical values for southern blacks.

Historian James Anderson notes that both Du Bois and Hope believed it necessary to promote liberal arts and professional education that would train black intellectuals along with lawyers, physicians, dentists and storekeepers. To Du Bois and Hope, liberal arts education was necessary for building an autonomous black community.⁶⁸ Du Bois, a native of Great Barrington,

⁶⁷ Davis, 89.

⁶⁸ Anderson, 241; generally, liberal education is simply defined as “the cultivation of the intellect,” according to John Henry Newman, with the object being “intellectual excellence.” John Henry Newman, *The Idea of*

Massachusetts was educated at Fisk in Nashville and became the first African American to earn a doctorate degree from Harvard University. He would serve as a faculty member and scholar activist at Atlanta University from 1897-1910. Du Bois was also instrumental in raising the nation's awareness of Atlanta University with his studies on blacks. John Hope was a native of Augusta, Georgia and was educated at Worcester Academy and Brown University. Hope was the first black faculty member at Atlanta Baptist College (later Morehouse College) where he also became the first black president in 1906 and later became the first president of the Atlanta University System in 1929. Unlike industrial education as Anderson asserts, both Du Bois and Hope believed that liberal arts curriculum would produce the much-needed leaders for a community such as teachers, doctors, and lawyers.⁶⁹

Louis Harlan notes that at the time when Booker T. Washington gave his speech at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, neither Du Bois nor Hope were the intellectual giants that they would become. Though they did not agree with Washington's stance, they both recognized Washington's new popularity and initially did not openly challenge his Hampton Model until 1903. Evidence shows that shortly after Washington gave his speech

a University, ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1982). Specifically, in the 1880s, as Anderson explained, New England classical, liberal curriculum entailed different courses on different level. The college curriculum course leading to a bachelor's degree usually required Latin, Greek, mathematics, science, philosophy, and in a few cases one modern language; See also Anderson, 28-29. Contemporarily, the purpose of a liberal arts education, as Christie Farnham explained, is "to discipline and furnish the mind, develop character, and enrich life by encouraging future learning." Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press,) 1994, 69.

⁶⁹ Anderson, "Philanthropic Control over Private Black Higher Education," in Robert Arno (editor), *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1980), 154-155, 163; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 241; Vida L. Avery, *A Fateful Hour in Black Education: The Creation of the Atlanta University System*, (Ph.D diss., Georgia State University, 2003).

in Atlanta, Du Bois telegraphed “Let me heartily congratulate you upon your phenomenal success at Atlanta.”⁷⁰

John Hope, Booker T. Washington, and Black Atlanta

In many regards, Dr. John Hope was recognized as one of the foremost educators that devoted his life to the education of African Americans. First as a faculty at Roger Williams University at Nashville, Tennessee, and later at the Atlanta Baptist College, now Morehouse College, he proved himself as an inspiring teacher. In 1906, he succeeded Dr. George Sale as president of Atlanta Baptist College, becoming the first African American to do so. For 25 years he worked to build up a high-ranking institution for black men in Atlanta. In the early 20th century and presently, Morehouse stands as one of the highest ranking historically black colleges and the only all-male black institution of higher learning. The earlier prestige is due largely to the efforts of John Hope. In 1929, when Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College were affiliated with the university system, Hope was unanimously chosen to be its first president. As president of the Atlanta University system, more than a million dollars were spent for building and for physical improvements of the campus, and more than two million dollars were added to the university endowment. However, his greatest achievement was bringing together Atlanta’s six institutions of higher learning to work for the good of all. In addition to Hope’s activities, he improved living conditions for blacks in Atlanta. He was very active in attaining federal aid in clearing a portion of slum area in Atlanta’s West End and the building of

⁷⁰ “W.E.B. Du Bois to B.T. Washington,” 24 September 1895, in *Booker T. Washington Papers, 1895-1898*; ed. Louis R. Harlan (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 4: 26; W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940), 55; also quoted in Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 174-75; see also Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*.

public housing for black families and as a result, was appointed by Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to be chairman of the Citizen's Advisory Committee to supervise the University Housing Project. This project was of significant worth in that it was the first of its kind to be authorized and the first to be actually undertaken. The building of the model apartments, which housed 677 families, was completed in May of 1936. As a staunch advocate of racial uplift and black education in the South, Hope was, at the time of his death, carrying out a unique project, which might be termed a pioneer in the field of liberal education for black youth.⁷¹

Leroy Davis notes that John Hope was present at Atlanta's Piedmont Park and heard Washington's talk and, for the most part, kept his thoughts about Washington to himself. Yet his letters written to his wife Lugenia Burns during their courtship evidenced Hope's disdain for Washington's model.⁷² Never taking aim at Washington, Hope commented in a series of lectures that preached liberal arts education and was concerned with building an autonomous community. He believed that liberal arts education was central in the training of African American leaders and key to social progress. He also believed in preparing a black intelligentsia. Hope, as Du Bois, pushed for the concept of the 'talented tenth.' John Hope was aware of the looming tempest that pitted industrial education versus higher education and recognized, in Anderson's words, that "Washington and Tuskegee were Armstrong and Hampton in blackface."⁷³

⁷¹ "Eminent Educator Dies: Dr. John Hope, Illustrious Educator and Pioneer of Race, Dies," *Atlanta Daily World*, Thursday, 29 February 1936, box 71, folder 9, Hope Papers, Robert W. Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center (AUC).

⁷² Davis, 89-90; Also, the Washington Model refers to a curriculum towards industrial education as seen at Tuskegee Institute.

⁷³ Davis, 89-90.

Black Education and its Influence on Atlanta's Black Community

If you want to touch Negro welfare quickly and effectively at many points, do it through the teacher and the school. For the life of the community centers in them, flows around them, depends on them. Extending far beyond desk and blackboard, the influence of the Negro teacher reaches out into the homes of the pupils and often makes all the difference between a good and a bad community.

--John Hope, President
Atlanta University⁷⁴

Close friends and colleagues at Atlanta, W.E.B. Du Bois and John Hope along with tailor and city councilman William Finch and former slaves James Tate and Grandison B. Daniels, who opened the first public school in Atlanta for black children, were widely considered the impetus in the movement for public education for black children and liberal arts education in Atlanta's black community. Yet, Du Bois and Hope believed in a concept proposed by Du Bois—a “talented tenth—the best of the race that they may guide the mass away for the contamination and death of the worst, in their own and other races.”⁷⁵ Cultivating a group to lead and masses to follow presents a contentious point whereas it is necessary to focus more on the ninety percent than the ten percent set aside for leadership. Yet Du Bois and Hope believed that liberal arts education would cultivate the “black intelligentsia.” In a speech delivered on April 12, 1896, Hope stated:

Now we consider it right and proper that a certain percent of our people should have such training as will put them on a level with all other races in the quest for higher knowledge in letters and science. The progress, dignity, and respectability of our people depend on this. Mere honesty, mere wealth will not give us rank among the other people of the civilized world: and, what is more, we ourselves will never be

⁷⁴ *John Hope, Negro School and Community*, box 65, folder 2, John Hope Articles and Notes on Negro Education and Business, 1929-1932, AUC.

⁷⁵ Du Bois, 87

possessed of conscious self-respect, until we can point to men in our own ranks who are easily the equal of any race.⁷⁶

Du Bois and Hope envisioned that public education for black children would feed Atlanta's black institutions of higher learning and therefore provided the community with aspects of industrial education, but more importantly, a professional class that could negotiate with the other races. It was Hope's mission to move Morehouse College, and later the Atlanta University System, from normal schools to colleges with real training because he believed that blacks were destined to remain in the South, and that a premium collegiate education be sustained and nurtured in the region where the majority of African Americans resided.⁷⁷

Atlanta, Georgia stood at center stage as an ivory tower for educating African Americans. Yet, book learning and skill were not the only attributes brought on by black education. The significance of black education, according to Davis, was seen in the development of two distinct class groups within the African American community: 1). A black upper class that was of mixed heritage and inherited wealth from their white lineage; 2). A black middle class with education but no inherited wealth. Yet, the new southern African American middle-class was, in many ways, similar to the upper-class elite. Certainly many graduates of Atlanta University, Morehouse College and Spelman were light-skinned, and almost all of them enjoyed the same social activities of the elite. Black Middle-class graduates of the city's colleges were also critical of the behavior and social activities of the black rank and file, and believed their only salvation lay in education and the adoption of a "high" European culture. The fine line that distinguished the black upper-class from the middle class may have been, as Hope believed, inherited opportunity versus self-made opportunity, surely there was overlap between the two classes in

⁷⁶ John Hope, "The Need of a Liberal Education for Us, and That, Too, in the South." Speech delivered 12 April 1896, Hope Papers, AUC.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

this black “world-within-a-world.” Historian Faye Robbins recognized the existence of upper-class elite, yet believed that the line separating the middle class from the upper class in the 1890s “cannot be drawn with the evenness of a board saw in two pieces, but is more like the jagged edge of one broken across the knee.”⁷⁸

W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Black Atlanta

At the dawn of the twentieth century, W.E.B. Du Bois played a critical role in grappling with the social ills of America in general, and black Atlanta in particular. In 1897, Du Bois accepted a position to teach sociology, a field of study in its infancy, at Atlanta University. At Atlanta according to Saunders Redding, Du Bois set up a program of studies of African Americans, which was to be “primarily scientific—a careful search for truth conducted as thoroughly, broadly, and honestly as the material resources and mental equipment at command would allow.” In 1903, Du Bois wrote a series of essays and sketches entitled *The Souls of Black Folk* aimed to ‘sketch, in vague, uncertain outline, the spiritual world’ of black America. It carried a prophecy that has haunted America: “The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.”⁷⁹ In this, Du Bois thoroughly discussed the work of Booker T. Washington, the meaning of progress, education, politics, race relations, and religion. Most important, were Du Bois’ discussions of the quest for liberal arts education and its relevance for sustaining an autonomous black community. It was not until the publication of his essay entitled “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington” that Du Bois openly criticized Washington. He felt that

⁷⁸ Davis, 79; see also Faye Wellborn Robbins, *A World Within A World: Black Nashville, 1880-1915*, (Ph.D diss., University of Arkansas, 1980.)

⁷⁹ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*, (New York: Fawcett Publication, Inc., 1961).

Washington's program of industrial education was outmoded and commensurate with the philosophy of the old South. Du Bois was particularly disturbed by the timing of Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" Speech, coming at a time when life in the South was a violent and oppressive era for blacks.

Du Bois thought that Washington's Hamptonian model focused solely on revenue and material gains, and missed the mark toward social mobility for African Americans. The 1890s presented a particular moment in the history of the South. According to Du Bois, it was a watershed moment where interactions between educated, uneducated, blacks, and whites were frequent. Washington's program, Du Bois maintained, relegated blacks to the very bottom of the New South's social order. Du Bois wrote:

In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached at such crises has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing. In answer to this, it has been claimed that the Negro can survive only through submission. Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things: first, political power; second, insistence on civil rights; third, higher education of Negro youth,--and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, and accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South. This policy has been courageously and insistently advocated for over fifteen years, and has been triumphant for perhaps ten years. As a result of this tender of the palm-branch, what has been the return? In these years there have occurred: 1) The disfranchisement of the Negro; 2) The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro; 3) The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.⁸⁰

The Souls of Black Folk also explored the development of a new professional and working class and its implications for the strivings of the black South. As Du Bois put it:

Such are not men of the sturdier make; they of Atlanta turned resolutely toward the future; and that future held aloft vistas of purple and gold--Atlanta, Queen of the cotton kingdom; Atlanta, Gateway to the Land of the Sun; Atlanta, the new Lachesis, spinner of web and woof for the world. So the city crowned her hundred hills with factories,

⁸⁰ Du Bois, 37-38.

and stored her shops with cunning handiwork, and stretched long iron ways to greet the busy Mercury in his coming. And the nation talked of her striving.⁸¹

Atlanta's characterization as the new Lachesis, a mythical entity that measured the length of the thread of human achievement, posited the city as the American South's phoenix of promise. Employed as textile factory, washerwomen, skilled workers, artisans, and porters, opportunities for work encouraged freedmen to migrate to Atlanta. Though these labor-oriented occupations eased economic despair, they did little to establish the foundation needed to make the black community a viable economic and social force. To Du Bois, this was his outcry for free public, liberal arts and professional education for black America.

In his essay entitled "Of the Wings of Atalanta," Du Bois used a mythical anecdote to explain how greed, capitalism and materialism were the utmost nemeses of black America as a whole and to Atlanta's black community in particular. His reference to the Greek mythical character Atalanta was a symbol of Atlanta's black community. As such, Atalanta was the princess of Boeotia, a fair maiden and master huntress who vowed that she would only marry the man who beat her in a foot race. Of those vowing for her hand in marriage was the young and dashing suitor Hippomenes. Legend told of her fleet of foot, which assured her victory as well as the death to those suitors whom dared to race her. Hippomenes, sentencing himself to death if defeated, chose to distract her during the race by laying three golden apples along the course of the race. As the race commenced and Atalanta sprinted towards the finish line, she became distracted and tempted by the golden apples and eventually focused her attentions on them instead of reaching the finish line.

Du Bois wrote "She fled like a shadow, paused, startled over the first apple, but even as he stretched his hand, fled again; hovered over the second, then, slipping from his hot grasp, flew

⁸¹Du Bois, 72.

over river, vale, and hill; but as she lingered over the third, his arms fell round her, and looking on each other, the blazing passion of their love profaned the sanctuary of Love, and they were cursed. If Atlanta be not named for Atalanta, she ought to have been.”⁸² Atalanta represented black America in general and black Atlanta in particular. Hippomenes and his golden apples represented the economic gains brought on by the new industry and social interactions emerging in the South. These economic gains would also be enhanced by industrial education preached by Washington. The finish line represented a self-sufficient black community. Du Bois’ focus on “the wings of Atalanta” was symbolic of the black educational institutions of higher learning that called Atlanta home. The idea that education in pursuit of wealth and status could side track black Atlanta from the more important goals of political enfranchisement, civil equality, and a higher order of civilization.

Du Bois’ idea of liberal arts education put African Americans in charge of their destiny and would not allow them to fall prey to the exploitative agendas of both prejudice and paternalistic whites. To articulate this idea, Du Bois wrote:

Atalanta is not the first or the last maiden whom greed of gold has led to defile the temple of love; and not maids alone, but men in the race of life, sink from the high and generous ideals of youth to the gambler’s code of the Bourse; and in all our Nation’s striving is not the Gospel of Work befouled by the Gospel of Pay? So common is this that one-half think it normal; so unquestioned, that we almost fear to question if the end of racing is not gold, if the aim of man is not rightly to be rich. And if this is the fault of America, how dire a danger lies before a new land and a new city, lest Atlanta, stooping for mere gold, shall find that gold accursed!⁸³

“Of the Wings of Atalanta” spoke directly to the pivotal issues pertinent to free public education for black children, liberal arts education for college curriculum, and professional education for business owners, lawyers, doctors, dentist etc. With this, Du Bois carved out the blueprint for sustenance for early 20th century black America at large and Atlanta’s black community in particular. Black triumph lay with the institutions of higher education in Atlanta.

⁸² Du Bois, 64.

⁸³ Du Bois, 64-65.

Du Bois felt that swiftness to sustenance, through industrial education was not the key to attaining good relations between the races but that liberal arts education—to discipline and furnish the mind, develop character, and enrich life by encouraging future learning—would deem African Americans worthy of business partnerships and social interactions.

On status, Du Bois coined the term the “Talented Tenth,” emphasizing the necessity for higher education to develop the leadership capacity among the most able ten percent of black America. He wrote “Hither has the temptation of Hippomenes penetrated; already in this smaller world, which now indirectly and anon directly must influence the larger for good or ill, the habit is forming of interpreting the world in dollars. The old leaders of Negro opinion, in the little groups where there is a Negro social consciousness, are being replaced by new; neither the black preacher nor the black teacher leads as he did two decades ago. Into their places are pushing the farmers and gardeners, the well-paid porters and artisans, the businessmen—all those with property and money.”⁸⁴ With this, Du Bois spoke to the shifts in leadership and goals from preacher and teacher, the center of the old black community, to businessmen and artisans. This idea reiterates the symbolic meanings of the golden apples laid by Hippomenes where African Americans moved from righteousness to greed and served prophetic in the future of black professionals in Atlanta.

What was clear with Du Bois was the notion that African Americans had forgotten the importance of religion and faith fostered during the experience of slavery. He hoped that black businesses, black schools, black political movements and black cultural expressions, four major components of black life would foster a sustainable and autonomous black community. All of these factors were congruent with the black Atlanta. Du Bois wrote “What if the Negro people

⁸⁴ Du Bois, 67.

be wooed from a strife for righteousness, from a love of knowing, to regard dollars as be all and end-all of life? What if to the Mammonism of America be added the rising Mammonism of the re-born South, and the Mammonism of this South be reinforced by the budding Mammonism of its half awakened black millions? Whither, then, is the new-world quest of Goodness and Beauty and Truth gone glimmering? Must this, and that fair flower of Freedom which despite jeers of latter-day striplings, sprung from our fathers' blood, must that too degenerate into a dusty quest of gold—into lawless lust with Hippomenes.”⁸⁵ Du Bois' questioning indicates his belief that African Americans inherited too much integrity and wisdom, and had suffered at the hands of too many hardships to become idolaters of money. He was convinced that destiny would lead African Americans on this journey for education, which in time could provide more agency and self-determination for the black community. Thus chose Atlanta as the city best suited for this feat because of the historically black institutions of higher learning that called Atlanta home.

Du Bois believed that the benefit of a college education made white America respect black communities. A college education certified that blacks were worthy of all rights and privileges bestowed upon American citizens. Though Du Bois believed in cultural autonomy, education validated the ability to think and serve as leaders of their own communities. He wrote “And the final product of our training must be neither a psychologist nor a brick mason, but a man. And to make men, we must have ideals, broad, pure, and inspiring ends of living—not sordid money-getting, not apples of gold. The worker must work for the glory of his handiwork, not simply for pay; the thinker must think for truth, not for fame. And all this is gained only by human strife and longing; by ceaseless training and education; by founding Right on

⁸⁵ Du Bois, 68.

righteousness and Truth on the unhampered search for Truth; by founding the common school on the university, and the industrial school on the common school; and weaving thus a system, not distortion and bringing a birth, not an abortion.”⁸⁶ It is with these dynamics that we must understand why Atlanta has such a thriving black middle class. Atlanta has more historically black institutions of higher learning than any other city in the U.S. A significant percentage of college educated blacks either lived in Atlanta or were educated in Atlanta, giving Atlanta and the Atlanta University Center a strong hold on black education from which a vibrant, yet rigid middle class emerged. This structure imbibed a black social class alienated from the black masses through hereditary rank, profession, and wealth.

The Black Atlanta(s)

“Black Atlanta” refers to a collection of black enclaves scattered across the city. Different enclaves might order the collective goals differently—lower stats blacks placing pursuit of viable employment above formal education, propertied blacks placing moral reformation and political access above social activity. Nonetheless, like the interlocking pattern of a honeycomb, diverse segments of the black population in Atlanta were linked through shared cultural fraternity and racial solidarity, forming a larger community—each group a multi-sided unit, separate and discrete, yet also interdependent, creating a variegated and dynamic whole.”⁸⁷

Historically, Atlanta has played its roles in the sordid and troubled history of race relations that has long been the moniker of the American South. Evidence of this was seen through the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906 and the long history of lynching that plagued the state of Georgia and the Atlanta area in the early 20th century. During the summer of 1906, white resistance to black Atlanta’s rising economic and social power, along with the sensationalizing rhetoric of white politicians and unsubstantiated news stories about a black crime wave created

⁸⁶ Du Bois, 72.

⁸⁷ Allison Dorsey, *To Build Our Lives Together: Community Formation in Black Atlanta, 1875-1906*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 4-5.

dangerous levels of racial tension and hostility in Atlanta. The riot lasted from September 22-25, 1906 and at the end of the riot, at least 25 blacks and two whites lay dead. The race riot that brought national attention to the city in 1906 was, in part, an attempt to destroy the gains made by black Atlantans as a result in the coming together of the educational, political, economic and cultural factors present in Atlanta's black community.⁸⁸ Most importantly, we must understand the theme of intraracial cooperation which was central to the physical and socioeconomic development of black Atlanta. The ideology of racial solidarity became the foundation on which organizations and institutions were built. As a result of such, African Americans' commitment to the vote, to education, to fair wages, and to equitable treatment as citizens was tied to commitment to their community and "the race" at large. Because black Atlantans were not permitted access to municipal services and benefits, access to financial institutions, and the rights of citizenship, upper-class blacks were able to evade some of the social controls imposed by whites on the black working class and poor because of their connection to their white heritage.

With the establishment of educational institutions, the American Missionary Association's overall goal of securing educational access for Atlanta's black community and training teachers was manifested. According to sociologists Joseph Jewell, the Storrs Free School provided a solid educational foundation for religion and citizenship for black school children in Atlanta, while Atlanta University trained teachers who subsequently staffed schools in Atlanta and other areas of Georgia and the South. In an article written by Du Bois, the scholar asserted that in the city of Atlanta alone, it was estimated that at least 75 percent of the city's

⁸⁸ Gregory Mixon, *The Atlanta Race Riots: Race, Class, and Violence in a New South City*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press 2004) and Mark Bauerlein, *Negrophobia: A Race Riot in Atlanta, 1906*, (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2001.)

teachers were Atlanta University graduates.⁸⁹ Through their affiliation with the AMA's educational institutions, members of Atlanta's black community, students instructed in genteel conduct. The AMA's educational institutions provided the youth of Atlanta's burgeoning black elite, as part of a black urban regime, with a shared social experience that necessarily served to establish and over time, continually reinforce the important social connections that are central in the formation of an upper elite among select families.⁹⁰

According to Virginia Hein and as previously stated, Atlanta's highly developed black middle and upper classes were advancing economically, socially, and politically. There were enclaves of black neighborhoods where a large percentage of blacks owned homes, yet the neatly maintained neighborhoods on the West side of Atlanta in which white Atlanta was unaware, was noted as 'a mark of segregation. They..... [were] as comfortable as those in the white neighborhoods, but they [were] part of a ghetto' which crossed the center of the city like a belt and then spread westward." Hein asserts that Atlanta's black community emerged as a remarkable and towering vanguard of black business, which deemed Atlanta "the largest single depository of black capital in the U.S.," according to *Fortune Magazine*. Black businessmen, affluent by any standard, were at the center of black community leadership. Hein notes the difference between Atlanta's white and black power structures, asserting that black Atlanta comprised primarily of businessmen, educators and ministers were of great importance to the black power structure. Citing Dr. Fred Crawford, she notes that Atlanta had one of the most articulate black leadership structures in America, white or non-white and the extent of its nationwide influence suggested it was the epitome of black "establishment" in the entire country.

⁸⁹ W.E.B. Du Bois, "The College Bred Negro," from *The Southern Workman*, 9 June 1901.

⁹⁰ Joseph O. Jewell, *Black Ivy: The American Missionary Association and the Black Upper Class in Atlanta, Georgia, 1875-1915*, (Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 1998) see chapter entitled *Black Ivy; Missionary Education and Atlanta's Black Upper Class*.

It was also believed that Atlanta had the most highly educated black population in the U.S. largely attributed to the aforementioned Atlanta University system. According to Hein and emphasized by Crawford of Emory University, “if leadership in America, white or non white were as socially conscious, active, knowledgeable, and articulate as many of the black leaders in Atlanta, many of America’s problems would be appreciably minimized, if not eliminated.”⁹¹

By and large, the most of the meaningful gains attained by black Atlantans in the 1960s came from voting. A federal court put black political consciousness into law in 1946 when the Georgia white primary law was struck down. Hein asserts that it is at that instance that cordial relationships developed between Auburn Avenue and Hunter Street, two black business districts, and some influential whites was not only good for Atlanta business, but for Atlanta politics as well. From this inception, there was little resistance in registering black voters in Atlanta and they feared no retribution for registering as blacks did in other parts of the state and the South. Consequently, Hein lends credence to this by charting Atlanta’s black voter registration growth: 3000 (4 percent of total Atlanta registration) in 1946; 41,000 (28.6 percent) in 1961; 64,000 (35.8 percent) in 1966; and 93,000 (44.8 percent) in 1969.⁹²

According to Hein, the influences that contributed to this sharp rise in political participation rested on black Atlanta’s fondness of auxiliary institutions of churches, social clubs, professional and business groups and, specifically, the Atlanta Negro Voters League. Churches played a paramount role by creating black political awareness. Hein, notes that scholar Mary Louis Frick maintained that experienced politicians held ministers in high regard. On black ministers, Frick spoke of them “as perhaps the most powerful of all influences on the Negro

⁹¹ Virginia H. Hein, “The Image of “A City Too Busy to Hate”: Atlanta in the 1960s” *Phylon* 33, no. 3, (1972): 211.

⁹² Hein, 212.

voter.” Black newspapers influenced the pulse of black participation. The *Atlanta Daily World*, one of only two such daily papers in the nation, had 22,000 subscribers by 1969. Frick reported that the black community thought of it as the “independent, conservative and pro- Republican,” while the *Atlanta Inquirer*, established in 1960 to fill a void in political news coverage, was regarded as “independent, liberal, activist within the law, and a bit pro-Democrat.” Both newspapers encouraged voting participation.⁹³

Unlike other southern civil rights hotbeds such as Birmingham and Montgomery, Atlanta was never considered as a true civil rights battleground, partly due to black urban regime politics. This black urban regime’s role in the quest for black education was largely centered around a term coined by Tomiko Brown-Nagin called “Atlanta style.” According to Brown-Nagin, it involved a small number of collaborators from among Atlanta’s black professional and civic elite acting as spokespersons and decision makers for the entire African American community—but without input or consent.⁹⁴ Unlike direct action grassroots organizations, this group, as a black urban regime, favored private negotiation with Atlanta’s white civic and business elite to secretly settle race-related disputes in Atlanta in the years after *Brown v Board of Education* of 1954. Brown-Nagin notes that though secret deal making went undisputed by the larger black community in the early years (1940-1959), vocal opposition arose after the student movements where working and poor classes criticized black elites for making decisions without their input. Anti-democratic and paternalistic, the “Atlanta style” was the antithesis of the direct action approach of the civil right movement, essentially an “old boy’s network.”

⁹³ Ibid; Mary Louise Frick, *Influences on Negro Political Participation in Atlanta, Georgia*, (unpublished M.A. thesis, Georgia State College, 1967), 47-50, 83;

⁹⁴ Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Class Actions: The Impact of Black and Middle Class Conservatism on Civil Rights Lawyering in a New South Political Economy, Atlanta, 1946-1979*, (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2002) see chapter entitled “Colonel” A.T. Walden and the Atlanta Style of Biracial Negotiation.

Atlanta's approach to addressing race-related problems rested on a hierarchy of social relations and an elite style of decision making.⁹⁵

Brown-Nagin asserts that the influence of the "Atlanta style" of interracial negotiation during the 1940s and 1950s illuminated intra-racial and class dynamics. This group of black elites pushed racial solidarity above civil unrest through voting campaigns and political endorsements. To grassroots and student movement organizations, the fact that the "Atlanta style" negotiators answered to Atlanta's white civic and business leaders proved to be crippling, because racial solidarity meant endorsing black candidates instead of negotiating for whites. This lent credence to the notion that the negotiators were more concerned with their own agendas of self-interests than actually advancing democracy. Black elites and middle classes thrived during segregation and hoped to form a gentlemen's agreement between blacks and whites. Because the two groups held common socioeconomic status, black negotiators assumed that white negotiators would not view them through the prism of racism—or as racial opponents—better yet seeing them as fellow gentleman with whom they could partner with to address difficult issues for the common good.⁹⁶ More important, this kind of interracial negotiation precluded working and poor classes from the political negotiations. The biracial negotiators assumed that a mixture of gentlemen's agreements and civil rights injunctions would lead the elimination of segregation and greater social and political equality for Atlanta's black community.

Because black elites formed social clubs and attended churches that catered specifically to their class, their social institutions cultivated and guarded an elite identity. Declaring

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

themselves as the Talented Tenth, as described by Du Bois, elite blacks expected to exercise leadership over social, economic, and political matter affecting black Atlanta, as it did not occur to them that the working and poor classes would be involved in advocacy or policy making. The idea of the Talented Tenth promoted self improvement and social climbing, common with the atmosphere of Atlanta's rapidly expanding economy. Fundamentally, it was the idea, shared or professed by many decision makers and public figures in the city—black and white—that Atlanta, as the quintessence New South city, was special, and that its distinctiveness made it ideally suited to address the problem of race. Atlanta, from this perspective, was truly “a city too busy to hate.”⁹⁷

Historian Alexia B. Henderson notes that black businessmen capitalized on the system of segregation imposed by white politicians and supported by the white business elite. Atlanta businessmen had long clustered on Auburn Avenue and Hunter Street near the downtown business district and served both blacks and whites. After the Atlanta Race Riots in 1906, the businesses served an exclusively black clientele.⁹⁸ The survival of these businesses along Auburn Avenue was largely dependent on black patronage and the system of segregation, catering to the needs of the black community. It was these business owners that determined the course of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta.

In 1968, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders released a report commissioned by President Lyndon B. Johnson, to investigate the causes of the 1967 riots in the United States. Johnson was interested in understanding the causes that ignited these riots in

⁹⁷ The “City Too Busy to Hate” connotes a term brought on by Atlanta Mayor William Hartsfield and has been noted has one of the popular moniker of Atlanta, Georgia.

⁹⁸ Alexia B. Henderson, *Atlanta Life Insurance Company: Guardian of Black Economic Dignity*, (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 1990), 95.

order to; if at all possible, prevent this kind of civil unrest from erupting again. Chaired by Illinois governor Otto Kerner Jr., this report often referred to as the “Kerner Report” was made public on February 29, 1968. Its finding was that the riots resulted from black frustration towards discrimination. It surmised, “Our nation was moving toward two societies, one black and one white— separate and unequal.”⁹⁹ This investigation concluded that the main cause of urban violence was white racism. It called to create jobs, construct new housing, and dismantle de facto segregation and poverty in order to eradicate vicious ghettos in central cities—the largest city of a standard metropolitan statistical area, that is, a metropolitan area containing at least one city of 50,000 or more inhabitants.¹⁰⁰

As a result, a team of journalists from the *Atlanta Journal* authored *The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta*. This series, dating between May 5th and May 23rd of 1968, followed a rough outline of the report by the National Advisory Commission on the Civil Disorders, as it applied to Atlanta. They studied local black history, black family structures, relationships between the police and the black community, black political progress, employment situations, educational systems, exploitation of the black poor, housing problems, and the impact of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in order to understand black perspectives on discrimination. Through feedback from its readers, the Two Atlanta Writing Team concluded that Atlanta was not moving toward to societies, one black, one white...Atlanta was two societies.¹⁰¹ It was evident that the citizens of the two Atlantas knew little about each other and few had any way of learning more. Yet, in understanding Atlanta’s

⁹⁹ Two Societies Grow Closer, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 2, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL; *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder* (Washington, DC; GPO March 1, 1968).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

black communities what the Kerner Report missed was that Atlanta, in fact, was three societies, one white and two black.

Much of this chapter's focus has discussed agents of change in the perpetuation of a black Mecca, yet a significant portion of Atlanta's black community was still plagued by social ills and urban blight. The second black Atlanta were victims of inadequate housing, poor municipal services, idleness, dirt, decay, overcrowding, poor play ground facilities or none at all, and poverty—always, endlessly, to little money. Those who lived in poverty area slums—especially the black slums—had never received an equal share of the city services. Hein notes that on social blight, according to Anne Rivers Siddons, she wrote “Streets were unpaved, schools were much more crowded, the enforcement of sanitation, housing and other standards were much less stringent and street lights were virtually non existent stated by surveys on social blight. Their problems touched every imaginable strata and facet of human frustration...indignities and discrimination....inequitable real estate practices.....garbage uncollected....sewers running open, rats and vermin running unchecked.”¹⁰² As such, what resulted was inadequate childcare, a lack of recreation equipment and rampant unemployment. What was concluded by surveys done to measure social blight was that almost everyone that lived in this Atlanta was extremely skeptical of the local government's motivation from which...most people did not believe the benign expressions of good intent made by local officials.¹⁰³

According to Hein, during the 1960s, “Atlanta's population increased from 487,455 in 1960 to 502,500 in 1969; the non-white population grew from 186,820 (38.3 percent of the total)

¹⁰² Hein, 215.

¹⁰³ Community Council of the Atlanta Area, Inc., Research Center, *Social Blight and Neighborhood Renewal*, (Atlanta: the Council, June, 1967), C. 7-8

to 236,800 (47.7 percent). The city gained about 50,000 non-whites and lost about 35,000 whites in nine years making a net gain in total population of 15,000. Importantly, the major complaints amongst black Atlantans between 1950 and 1960 were:

1. Their schools were inadequate and overcrowded
2. They needed better housing
3. Too few blacks served on grand and petit juries
4. Not enough blacks were employed by the city and none of those employed had been promoted
5. Blacks had had no representation on the Atlanta Board of Aldermen
6. Black should receive more job opportunities with local governmental agencies

At the beginning of the decade, most of Atlanta's progress was made in areas such as public parks, buses, lunch counters and libraries, yet the following figures show discrimination endured by blacks in the early 1960s when they constituted more than one- third of the city's population:

- 41 major parks for white Atlantans; three for blacks
- 20 football fields for whites; non for blacks
- 16 recreation centers for white; three for blacks
- 12 swimming pools for whites; three for blacks
- 22 baseball diamonds for whites; three for blacks
- 119 tennis courts for whites; no more than eight for blacks”¹⁰⁴

In addition to being sub standard, these facilities were so overcrowded that they tended to become trouble spots. However, Atlanta was the second city to receive approval and funds for its Model Cities Plan and, with the assistance of Economic Opportunity Atlanta (EOA), the city

¹⁰⁴ Hein, 216-17; See also Annie L. McPheeters, *Negro Progress in Atlanta, Georgia 1950-1960: A Selective Bibliography on Human Relations from Four Atlanta Newspapers*, 11

instituted an active community development program which was expanded to provide year round neighborhood services in disadvantaged areas.¹⁰⁵

Hein also noted that “in spite of the aforementioned wealth in Atlanta’s black community, the median income of a black family in the 1960 census was less than half of the white family’s \$6350 a year, and forty-eight percent of black families earned less than \$3,000 a year. In 1960 half of all black male employees and three quarters of all black female employees in Atlanta were laborers, service or domestic workers, compared with seven percent of white males and nine percent female workers. The overall unemployment rate of 1.9 percent, of which Atlantans were so proud of in the mid-sixties, was deceptive, according to a National Education Association (NEA) Special Study, as it did ‘not show the extent of underpaid, untenured, unstable laboring domestic, and other low status service employment among Atlanta’s black employed persons.’ Few blacks, including those with college degrees, were able to find employment opportunities in Atlanta that were not restricted to teaching, black businesses, or the post office. In order to find positions equal to their education, most black graduates had to leave Atlanta. Municipal employment practices improved decidedly throughout the decade, at least in regard to the hiring and promoting of blacks. In 1967 more than half of those hired by the city were blacks though, according to the Kerner Report, it only brought their proportion of the city work force to twenty-eight percent. Of 908 police department employees, eighty-five were black—a higher proportion of blacks than in most major police departments in the nation. In 1969, out of 897 sworn personnel in the police department, blacks constituted about seventeen percent. As of March 1969, an *Atlanta Constitution* staff writer reported that some thirty-nine

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

percent of the city hall workforce was black, but none of the city's twenty department heads and precious few supervisory employees, in general were black.”¹⁰⁶

The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders report applied to Atlanta in numerous ways. According to the *Two Atlantas* series, it was estimated that in the Old Fourth Ward slum area in 1968, the average black family had five or six children, lived in fewer than five rooms and existed on an inadequate diet. Women headed most of these families. Approximately 32,000 people lived in Atlanta's 16 housing projects. Four of these housing projects were built for whites. Black Atlantans inhabited the others. It was estimated that 75 percent of the 32,000 residents were black. Of those 32,000, 18,000 were children. In 1963, women headed 45 percent of these households. But by 1967, that figure had risen to 63 percent. What can be concluded from this was a failed welfare system that did not aid male-headed families. According to the 1967 Fulton County Department of Human Resources Records, black females comprised of 51.5 percent of all people on welfare. According to the Georgia State Department of Welfare, of those families that received aid to dependent children during the 1966-67 fiscal year, 75.8 percent were black. The report also shows that nearly one-fourth of all black births were illegitimate.¹⁰⁷ The importance of the Kerner Report was believed to be critical in understanding of black urban sociology and spawned reactionary media from numerous central cities. Yet the statistics here pathologized black communities in promoting racial stereotypes not only believed by white Atlantans, but educated blacks as well. As such, the Two Atlanta Study focused on the ways in which business models, economics, education,

¹⁰⁶ Hein 217-18

¹⁰⁷ Family Life in the Slums, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 5, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

employment, politics and institutions of faith could help bridge the gap between the Atlantas. As Hein noted, most of white Atlantans had heard of, without ever seeing, “Summerhill,” “Vine City,” and Dixie Hills” where dissatisfaction had been strongly expressed in the mid-sixties by black Atlantans who had not felt the “benevolent glow of the city’s enlightenment.”¹⁰⁸

By the end of World War I and the exposure it gave to black soldiers, tied with increasing educational opportunities and financial improvement, two kinds of black family structures—two different kinds of family life—developed. According to Dr. William Jackson, Former Dean of the School of Social Work at Atlanta University and authority in black development noted that with the structure of the uneducated and economically disadvantaged became less cohesive, unstable and disorganized and more dependent on society, while the educated and financially advantaged black family developed an opposite structure. According to Jackson, the results of that development were apparent in Atlanta where there was a vast difference between the life of the city’s low income economically deprived families, scarred by denials of inadequacies, and that of those fortune.¹⁰⁹ Though there was some truth to this account, it is irresponsible for us to generalize Atlanta’s poor blacks. More importantly, what can be taken from Dr. Jackson’s account can be interpreted as a popular sentiment amongst Atlanta’s black middle and upper classes.

One area of investigation that the *Two Atlantas* Team focused on was the two societies that emerged within Atlanta’s black community. According to this study, there were those that worked at “respected places” and those that loitered on the street corner. To those on the street

¹⁰⁸ Hein, 215-16.

¹⁰⁹ Patterns of Slave System Still Affect Negro Family, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 5, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

corner, the police represented the system of oppression that did not accept them as part of society. Blacks in the ghetto tended to see law enforcement as those who evicted them from their homes, garnished their wages, or repossessed their belongings. The relationship between those on the corner and law enforcement spoke to the delicacy of the larger issue, the interaction between Atlanta's black poor and the government, where if tempers flared, it would lead to a rebellion with the black poor at its center in Atlanta. No aspect of Atlanta's racial picture was more critical to our understanding than the street corner—with the policemen representing one perspective of society and blacks on the corner representing the other—that the two Atlantas most frequently come together.¹¹⁰

In many ways, Atlanta was ahead of other American cities when a 1964 report issued by the Atlanta Commission on Crime and Juvenile Delinquency pinpointed poverty as the chief cause of crime. The commission headed by the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Griffin Bell and started out studying rising crime rates but found themselves deeply entrenched in study of social problems. What became apparent was that the two were inseparable and as a result, Atlanta's City Hall created a crime prevention program based on the notion that one must understand poverty better to understand high crime rates. Subsequently, many of Atlanta's black community, though primarily spokesmen for the middle class, conceded that police-community relations had improved since 1966. At the recommendation of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, City Hall hired 59 extra police officers to work in communities in an advisory capacity.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Life on the Street Corner, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 6, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹¹¹ Police Bear Ghetto Tensions, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 7, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL .

Within these two worlds of Atlanta's black community, poor blacks, frustrated by opportunities open to those outside of the city's ghettos were denied the things believed were readily available to whites and black upper and middle classes. What is clear is that poor blacks goals were shaped by an educational system designed for middle class white America. In return, poor black Atlantans felt the need to strike at the establishment, of which the police were the most accessible representative.

On Politics

Both leadership establishments in black and white Atlanta felt that politics were a way to bring the two societies together. Black state representative Julian Bond stated, "A disadvantaged people have to try a variety of ways."¹¹² Politics paved streets, provided some jobs and made sure some schools were built in black neighborhoods in need as opposed to white neighborhoods. Much of Atlanta's middle class leadership agreed that a political solution to black problems was valid. Political strategy was a calculated approach to bettering living conditions, but more importantly, there needed to be a campaign movement that connected and familiarized Atlanta's black masses to the local political process.

The overwhelming sentiment amongst Atlanta's black community of all classes translated into the same "powerlessness" mentioned in the Kerner Report. Many blacks felt that the political process was not for them, yet in all fairness, Atlanta's blacks had more influence in city politics than blacks in other southern cities. In 1968, Atlanta's black community comprised 45

¹¹² Can Politics Bridge the Gap?, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 9, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL .

percent of Atlanta's population and one-third of the city's registered voters. In the 1961 race for mayor, Ivan Allen supported by blacks, outpolled segregationist and later Governor Lester Maddox 31,000 to 125 among black voters, a fact that provided Mayor Allan with his margin of victory. To Atlanta's black leadership, bloc voting was nonsense and many admitted to supporting a candidate that would serve their interest.¹¹³ This lends further credence to issues centered on class divisions and interests amongst black Atlantans.

In 1965, black real estate mogul Q.V. Williamson became the first African American elected to the city's board of aldermen since reconstruction. He was also the second African American in the 20th century to win any city wide political race. A result of this power of the vote, white politicians became more interested in the request of black leaders, but despite the advancements accomplished for black in Atlanta's politics, there were also setbacks. The black position in 1960s Atlanta politics underwent local growth progression since its early days. Gone were the times when a single black leader could deliver the entire black vote alone, and, as such, white Atlanta had to reckon with the whole of black Atlanta, listening to the request of all facets of the masses.¹¹⁴

As black voters gained more experience, their voting organization progressed from machine politics, where one man wielded power, to a democracy, where numbers of interest groups directed the vote. This change forced politicians—both black and white—to spend more time courting the black vote and forced black Atlanta to recognize the detriments of the Atlanta style of interracial negotiation. This thrust forced politicians to move out onto the “grassroots” level and campaign close to the people. This movement shook black Atlanta to its core where a

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

chasm developed between Atlanta's "in office" black leaders and their constituents. What emerged was a new coalition called the Metropolitan Atlanta Summit Leadership Congress, which hoisted a new movement in black Atlanta politics as opposed to the Old Guard's Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference. The new coalition slowly replaced the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference founded in 1964. At that time it was the most powerful voice for Black Atlanta.

Previously, all Atlanta black office holders were middle class representing the poor people living in the ghettos. Middle class and old guard black leaders, such as Rev. William Holmes Borders, knew that his constituents called him Uncle Tom and replied, "I don't give a cuss what they say. I can get things done."¹¹⁵ Regardless, it was true that the younger leaders—epitomized by the new Summit's grassroots approach—were succeeding in wresting control of political leadership from "Atlanta Style's" old guard.

A high point in the struggle came in the fall of 1967 when leaders of the old guard attempted to deal with the city without consulting all of the Summit member organizations. A split occurred which indicated that the new Summit had gained more and more support. This was viewed as part of the trend that de-centralized leadership amongst blacks. Upper class black leaders were accepted at City Hall. They went behind closed doors without consulting with the black masses and as such, those in the ghettos became suspicious. The common sentiment amongst Atlanta's black working class and poor was that regardless of leadership ability, Atlanta's City Hall wanted black leaders with pedigree. Despite attention from city officials and the media, it was concluded that black militant leaders had little influence in Atlanta. However, black politicians conceded that black militants had a major effect on black leaders because their presence forced them to be more militant.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

One observation of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders was that almost all the urban rebellions sites of the summer of 1967 had governing councils elected through city-wide elections rather than by wards. Thus, the report maintained, city-wide elections made black communities feel less influential in city affairs. In Atlanta, it was apparent that ward elections—which were last held in the 1930s—could put more blacks on the aldermanic board. This issue, therefore, took on racial implications. In the 1968 General Assembly of the Georgia legislature, Julian Bond introduced a local bill that required ward elections for half of the city's then 16 aldermen. Black members of the legislature supported the measure. Whites opposed it. The bill was defeated handily. A white leader conceded that ward elections in Atlanta would be dangerous for white leaders.¹¹⁶ It was clear that despite divisions among local leaders within Atlanta's black community and the superseding power of the white establishment, politics remained a meaningful way to solve some problems—not only for upper and middle classed blacks, but for poor blacks as well.

Black participation in Atlanta politics forced the white establishment to reassess the estimation of black ability in government. Furthermore, many black politicians felt that white politicians had to grapple with the possibility of black opposition, which would be well respected within the black community. In 1968, an African American sat on the Atlanta board of Aldermen, there were many state representatives and two senators from Fulton County, and some black leaders felt that the possibility of a black mayor was not out of the question. Clarence Bacote, a former professor at Atlanta University and authority in black Atlanta politics, concluded that black participation in politics locally had altered the customs of this society. Bacote asserted that black men rarely, if ever, supported reactionary candidates, a fact that he felt significantly improved the quality of leadership in Atlanta. Whites now faced blacks in direct

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

political competition and a more moderate white Atlanta community that would not easily give in to the Old South mentality. Seeing blacks function in the legislature, in civic organizations, on the aldermanic board, on police committees, in government service, as firemen, postmen, and policemen—all of this made white Atlanta reexamine its relationship with the Atlanta's black community.¹¹⁷

On Education

Between 1960 and September of 1967, the Atlanta Public School System gained 25,000 black students while simultaneously losing 7000 white students. This major shift was a result of white Atlanta's refusal to share neighborhoods with blacks, pacing a mass exodus to the suburbs by Atlanta's whites. Whites moved out of the city as blacks moved in. Atlanta's public housing crisis played a critical role to Atlanta's white flight. Often, a single black family could not afford rent alone, and as such, invited neighbors—and their children—to move in with them in hopes of getting their children in a better school environment. A school that was adequate for a white neighborhood became half adequate for a black neighborhood. The black schools were likely double in enrollment, and thus, in the eyes of school officials, Atlanta's school problems became inextricably tied to housing. Segregation in one; forced segregation in the other. Fifteen previously all-white schools had gone all or almost all black since 1960. In the turnover, most of them became overcrowded.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Housing Key to School Problem, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 10, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

The blame for this educational crisis rested on Atlanta's refusal to desegregate its housing patterns. In 1968, Atlanta had 10 high schools that were all black and two that were predominantly black. Simultaneously, there was only one all-white high school, East Atlanta, and 11 others were predominantly white. Dr. John Letson, Atlanta School Superintendent contended that there was nothing to prevent any child from attending any public school in Atlanta. However, transportation difficulties, location of the homes, and the possible reception received from other students deterred many blacks from going across town to an all-white school.¹¹⁹ Educators estimated that if three out of ten students in a school were black, the school would go all black. This concept was termed as the tipping point. Steps to integrate the Atlanta School System were impeded by white flight.

Another problem that hindered bringing Atlanta's societies together was figuring out where new integrated schools would be located. Neighborhoods located in "fringe" areas were felt places with the best chances to be integrated. Often times, when a school was built in a fringe area, whites moved and the school would become all black.¹²⁰

As far as education within Atlanta's black community, all students were given IQ test that purportedly showed results that paralleled their economic levels. The Atlanta School System knew that IQ test were biased where middle class white children performed better and as such, this further complicated the placement for black children. Dr. Darwin Womack, Assistant Superintendent of School Plant Planning and Construction for Atlanta schools, stated, "ghetto children came from homes where they never saw printed materials, books or magazines around

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ School Pattern is Shifting, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 11, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL. According to Dr. Darwin W. Womack, assistant superintendent of school plant planning and construction for Atlanta schools, Fringe neighborhoods were transitional areas that lie on the edge of all-black or all-white communities.

the house and that motivation was not a value of black ghetto children.”¹²¹ What is increasingly clear here is that, as liberal and progressive as Atlanta School officials were, they still held fast to ignorant stereotypes of poor blacks. However, there were some tutorial programs such as the Vine City Foundation that provided one-on-one tutelage for poor blacks. It offered compensatory educational programs at no expense and was not aimed as a problem of race and intelligence, but the sociological problems as it related to background and exposure, something that school officials attributed to class. Atlanta’s black upper and middle classes far less utilized these programs, which tended to single out Atlanta’s black poor.

From 1962-1968, \$60 million was spent on school facilities in Atlanta. It was reported that 70 percent of this had gone to the betterment of overwhelming black areas. An effort that increased teachers’ salaries, reduced the pupil-teacher ratio, created new programs, and built a new technical high school. Nevertheless, between Atlantas societies, there was no equality. Five of the six largest high schools in Atlanta were all-black. Ten of the twenty-five high schools were overcrowded and six of these schools were predominantly black. According to school board records, there were fewer special classes for students in predominantly black schools where there were no speech or hearing therapists. However, the ten predominantly white high schools had special classes. In the 1967-68 academic year, predominantly black high schools averaged about \$171 in expenditures per student. Predominantly white schools averaged about \$219 per student.

Although black schools had the edge on white schools in average number of pupils per teacher with 18.9 in predominantly black schools as opposed to 19.1 in predominantly white, the average number of students per classroom was 28 in predominantly black schools and 27 in

¹²¹ Ibid.

predominantly white.¹²² What is suggested here is that predominantly white schools offered more classes than predominantly black schools. According to the Kerner Report, integration was the primary education strategy. Though there were improvements, the issue of integrating schools in Atlanta became more evasive due to whites unwillingness to learn with blacks.

Amid cries of black power that emerged in the 1960s, Atlanta, just as the rest of the black world, partook in a movement that emphasized racial consciousness and called for black political and cultural institutions to nurture and promote black collective interests, advance black values, and secure black autonomy. As such, blacks felt that one of the great tragedies in the American education system was the lack of African American history taught in schools. The history of African Americans, in this country, was buried under centuries of white supremacy and hegemony and as such, blacks were forced to live in a country without some common knowledge of its past. Before the black power movement, what was commonly taught in the history curriculum was that prior to the American Civil War, blacks were content with being slaves. In Atlanta, the absence of the black American experience taught in the educational curriculum did not parallel the experiences of Atlanta's black children due to white supremacy. Yet as a result of desegregation, there were efforts to include black history through supplemental materials. Integrated books were used as early as 1963 in the Atlanta School System. Interestingly enough, integrated books were used in all-black schools, whereas, predominantly white schools continued to use segregated texts. This suggested that Atlanta's school officials felt that adjusting to integration was a black problem, and as such, whites were more capable to adjust. This notion is in total disagreement, contrary to the actual concept of white flight which perpetuates an

¹²² Ibid.

assimilationist pedagogy for blacks. However, it was noted that middle class black parents made a gallant effort to teach black heritage to their children in their homes.¹²³

On Employment and Economics

Pervasive unemployment and underemployment were the most persistent and serious grievances in minority areas and inextricably linked to urban rebellions. To poor black Atlantans, the idea of the American dream was not at all attainable and as such growing up in the other Atlanta, the same Atlanta that reared, educated and influenced Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., blacks had almost given up on this dream. For those with little education, the Economic Opportunity of Atlanta program (EOA) was created to help the unemployed. The EOA placed those looking for work with jobs. There were those who connected unemployed blacks with loathsome stereotypes as individuals who were too lazy to work. One EOA work stated “They live off each other, off women on welfare or on day labor. When they do get a job, it is easier to drop back into the old habits than to get up and go to work every day.”¹²⁴ However, records indicate that many of Atlanta’s unemployed blacks lost jobs because they had not been forthcoming about prison records and were deemed untrustworthy. As such, the vast majority of Atlanta’s working class and poor blacks earnestly sought good jobs, worked hard at it and strove for higher position on the socio-economic ladder. With the emergence of a new market due to a technology boom that required skilled labor, blacks with little formal education did not qualify

¹²³ Textbooks Aimed at White Child, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 12, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹²⁴ Job Wall Hard to Scale, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 12, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

for these jobs and were forced to settle for jobs that did not pay them enough, forcing to live just above the poverty line with a threat of going below it. This is a major example of discrimination against blacks.

In Atlanta's business sector, blacks complained that business firms often hired only one or a very few token blacks as showcases of integration and progress. Many felt as if these firms were not actually hiring black employees to work, but felt that these token blacks would attract black consumers. What was also evident was that blacks were not treated equally when applying for jobs. Being told that they were too educated for some jobs, which was another form of subtle discrimination, also worked against black college graduates. Subject to unnecessary testing, discrimination manifested itself in ways that resembled literacy tests given to blacks going to vote before the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. An account from the Atlanta Urban League stated, "Studies have shown these tests are geared towards white society and most of them pick at your adaptability to white society, your interest in music, fine arts, travel. In other words, your broadness."¹²⁵

Statistics from the 1960s indicated that blacks in Atlanta had good reason for their complaints. According the 1960 census, only 20 percent of the city's black work force was employed by private industry as opposed to the 80 percent that worked for the government. The same census showed blacks as considerably under represented in every job category except as service workers, the lowest paying service jobs also being threatened with elimination.¹²⁶ The employment trends from 1960-1970 showed that the demand for laborers dropped 13 percent

¹²⁵ Job Attitudes a Problem, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 13, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹²⁶ U.S. Census from the year 1960.

while white-collar clerical jobs increased over 40 percent.¹²⁷ With this, programs such as the Merit Employment Association (MEA) were created that demonstrated how determination and education carved a place for blacks in the white dominant world of business and industry.

Witnesses were students supported by the MEA that went to predominantly black high schools and talked about the need to attain “marketable skills where neither black power nor white power were the solution to our (America’s) problem, but ‘green power’ was.”¹²⁸ Interestingly, though different from Atlanta’s street corner society, the witnesses were nonetheless a part of Atlanta’s two societies.

In March of 1968, fifty Atlanta businessmen met for luncheon at the Stadium Club to discuss way to put “hard core unemployed” Atlantans to work.¹²⁹ Interestingly enough, many of Atlanta’s businessmen were ignorant to the fact that Atlanta had so many unemployed which lent credence to the fact that there were indeed societal chasms that existed with little communication. As a result of no communication, poor blacks distrusted white employers and white employers did not know where to find poor blacks. An account from the Atlanta Urban League suggested that even though white employers advertised jobs, blacks often did not apply because they did not believe that they had a chance. Simultaneously, white employers were grappling with hiring and promoting blacks as well as appeasing their long time white employees.

¹²⁷ Job Attitudes a Problem, 13.

¹²⁸ Things Are Changing, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 13, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹²⁹ Businesses Tries to Respond, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 15, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL. According to this article the “hard core unemployed” are defined by the National Businessmen’s Alliance as those over the age of 45 or those between the ages of 16 and 21 who are physically disabled, school dropout or those with special obstacles (i.e. lack of motivation) which prevent them from holding a job.

In order to bridge the employment gap, the local chapter of the National Alliance of Businessmen (NAB) announced the beginning of a job drive to help the city's unemployed. The leaders asked for the help and cooperation of the 50 businessmen at the meeting. It marked the first time local business had taken any measures toward recognizing the problem. The aim was to dismantle obstacles that existed between Atlanta's societies when it came down to the category of jobs. These obstacles included:

1. The applicant must be high school graduate
2. The applicant must be able to pass certain aptitude and intelligence test
3. The applicant must be over 21
4. The applicant must be under 50
5. The applicant must be male; applicant must be white
6. The applicant must not be physically handicapped.

Importantly, the NAB businessmen pointed out that these qualifications often had little to do with the jobs that they were written for.¹³⁰

The NAB drive collected 1718 job pledges, 96 percent of its goal. Salaries for jobs ranged from \$1.60 minimum wage up to few at \$3 an hour. The next step was to actively recruit the jobless to take the jobs. To ensure the campaign's success, a unique approach was implemented where the employers went into Atlanta's slums to recruit the unemployed. As such, six rolling "job mobiles" circulated in the slums to lure potential workers. The job mobiles, old buses donated by churches and individuals were designed to recruit people, transport them to available jobs, and insured that they were accepted and worked out successfully. Former Georgia Labor Commissioner Sam Caldwell stated, "Many times, these people would be referred to a job, then

¹³⁰ Ibid.

be screened out once they got there because of educational requirements prison records or something else.”¹³¹ The responsibility in making this program work lay with both the unemployed as well as the employer, but Atlanta businessmen realized that they had to make the first move. The NAB local efforts demonstrated that progress could exist between Atlanta two societies in the category of jobs. Not all of Atlanta businessmen cooperated. However, there was an attempt to establish contact between the two Atlantas.

The aforementioned relationships between the economies the Atlantas, particularly between white fraudulent businessmen who exploited the black poor, were strained. Poor blacks believed that white local merchants exploited them and evidence substantiated these beliefs. There were grocery stores in Atlanta that inflated its prices to coincide with the arrival of welfare checks. There was a deceptive business outfit known as “the blue suede shoe boys” threatened poor black homeowners with foreclosure and eviction unless home repair contracts were signed. There were door-to-door salesmen in Atlanta who sold \$100 vacuum cleaners for \$300, discounted the contracts to a finance company the next day and then disappeared. There were loan companies in Atlanta that charged \$108 interest on a one year \$300 loan. The same loan at a downtown bank cost \$24. There were grocery stores in Atlanta that charged tax on each item and then tax again on the total price. There were poor blacks in Atlanta who had to buy at a higher priced grocery store because it was the only one in their ghetto and they had no car to take them out of the area to another store. There were black people in Atlanta—and a few white—conned or intimidated into buying overpriced items from fast talking door-to-door salesmen. There were black people in Atlanta—and some white who got into trouble because of too easy credit buying and poor money management. In other cities, exploitation by white merchants was given as the reason for most of the fires in urban rebellions. Evidence of this can be seen after

¹³¹ Ibid.

one store burned in one area of Atlanta following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., residents in the neighborhood said the white store owner that shortchanged young children who would come into his store.¹³²

There is evidence in Atlanta that supported the contention of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders that confirmed complaints of exploitation. Legal aid handled 4000 cases ever year where merchants filed lawsuits for money owed by poor blacks. In an astounding two-thirds of the cases, either the court ruled in favor of the defendant or the merchant dropped the charges after receiving a letter from legal aid. More interestingly, only a small percentage of economically exploited black Atlantans ever sought help from qualified attorneys because most did not realize their exploitation. One of the major financial problems weighing on poor blacks was readily available credit without qualification. Lenders were not concerned with whether these people could pay because creditors were prone to blame consumer for not using better judgment. It was estimated that 50 percent of profit in Atlanta stores was attributable to service charges and interest.¹³³

Housing

Public housing was first enacted in Atlanta for those of all races. However, in the 1960s, housing discrimination in Atlanta prevented access to many areas of quality living particularly the suburbs where quality housing existed. Landlords created “back pressure” that made it

¹³² Exploiters Sow Bitterness, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 16, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹³³ Ibid.

possible to break up apartments for denser occupancy while it kept rent of deteriorated ghetto housing higher than it would be in a truly free market. In 1968, there were approximately thirty slumlords in Atlanta who rented to 50,000 occupants in ghetto areas. Most of the slumlords were white while 75 percent of the renters were black. There were between 17,000 and 19,000 units of sub-standard housing in Atlanta. In addition, between 1000 and 1200 units were deemed dilapidated each year. Poor housing conditions for Atlanta's blacks, was one of the major concerns for the city's administration. A housing shortage existed and the magnitude of the matter was believed to be equal to the number of sub-standard housing. Ironically in middle class white Atlanta, there was no housing shortage as proof can be seen in housing advertisement of the Sunday classified section of the *Atlanta Journal*, yet only a few of these housing units were open to poor Atlantans and even fewer were open to poor black Atlantans which showed the desperate need for public housing in the city. In January of 1968, then Mayor Ivan Allen set housing as his primary goal in his "State of the City Address."¹³⁴

In 1967, Mayor Ivan Allen announced a drive to build 9,800 public housing units by the end of 1968 and 7,000 the following year. This undertaking totaled about 1000 acres in land. However, the idea was hit with resistance by Atlanta's white middle class communities, with the belief that public housing in their neighborhood ruined their communities. This thwarted efforts to rid the city of slum communities, an issue supported by voters, yet these voters wanted no parts of the public housing community which was primarily black and poor. Their sentiment was that the black poor should have decent housing but not in their neighborhoods. When the city attempted to get land in southwest Atlanta's Cascade Heights re-zoned for public housing, the

¹³⁴ Public Housing Desperate Need for City's Poor, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 17, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

citizens in the area arose in indignation and defeated the motion saying that there was too much public housing in the area to begin with. It should be noted that Southwest Atlanta has historically been an area where both blacks and whites lived. However, what is not clear were black upper and middle class sentiments on this issue.¹³⁵

Southwest Atlanta had ten percent of the city's public housing. Documents show that the popular sentiment amongst city officials was that all public housing was being pumped to Atlanta's 7th ward, Atlanta southwest side. As such, City Hall struggled to find pieces of land for public housing that were agreeable to its neighbors, city planners, and the federal government who underwrote the cost of the housing. There were 9029 units of low-rent public housing units where 32,000 Atlantans lived. Another 140 units were under construction next to Perry Homes. In urban renewal areas, 82 units were occupied while 650 units were under construction. Another 4,550 low-rent public housing units were in the planning stage would be opened in the next 18 months. That gave Atlanta 14,000 units. The city would have had 90 percent of the housing goal of 9,800 units committed to construction in 1968 if land had been available when the program was started in 1966 as a result of the Model Cities Program of 1966.¹³⁶

Another aspect of the housing problem was concerned with the demolition of housing units as a result of urban renewal, which added pressure to existing housing issues. From 1957–1967, 21,000 units of housing totaling 67,000 people were demolished for expressway

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid; see also President Lyndon B. Johnson authorized the Model Cities program on November 3, 1966 by the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 and ended in 1974. Model Cities originated in several concerns of the mid-1960s. Widespread urban violence, disillusionment with the Urban Renewal program, and bureaucratic difficulties in the first years of the War on Poverty led to calls for reform of federal programs. The Model Cities initiative created a new program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) intended to improve coordination of existing urban programs and provide additional funds for local plans. The program's initial goals emphasized comprehensive planning, involving not just rebuilding but also rehabilitation, social service delivery, and citizen participation. In 1969 Nixon administration changed course, and HUD retreated from insisting on citizen participation.

construction, urban renewal, and other government projects. Expressways were the greatest evictors, displacing 23,000 Atlantans. Urban renewal—cynically referred to as “urban removal” by black Atlantans resulted in the destruction of 3,806 dwellings and displaced 17,000. While the 21,000 units were being bulldozed, the city built only 5000 units of low rent low rent housing, affecting all poor people, both black and white. In Atlanta, blacks comprised the overwhelming majority of the poor. Forty-two percent of Atlanta’s black paid less than \$50 a month in rent while only 13 percent of white people did the same. Additionally, white Atlanta would not rent or sell to black Atlantans. Although new areas opened up to blacks as result of white flight to the suburbs—segregated housing became a glaring blight on the city as concluded in a study conducted by City Hall. According to another study done by City Hall, the index of housing segregation in Atlanta rose from 87.4 percent in 1940 to 91.5 percent in 1950 to 93.6 percent in 1960, by 1970, there was total segregation. As such, these forces developed Atlanta’s ghettos where blacks were forced to live because housing was neither sold nor rented to them. In the 1960s, statistics showed that bathroom facilities were either missing, shared or not located in the same building in 1 out of every 8 black owned housing units as compared to one out of every 80 white owned.¹³⁷

The 1967 Community Improvement Program reported that “a majority of the white community in Atlanta believed that all blacks were socially unacceptable.” Consequently the report continued that members of the white community did not wish to have blacks moving into their neighborhoods.¹³⁸ A report by the Southern Regional Council confirmed similar observations and added that more sophisticated whites sometimes tried to retain the prestige of

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ City of Atlanta Community Improvement Program—Social Blight and Social Resources Study, (Atlanta: the Council, June 1967), 7-8.

not living on the same streets as blacks by having their street's name changed blanketed under the mask of urban renewal. The reports concluded "this is why Hunter Road became Mozley Drive at Chappel Road, Boulevard became Monroe Drive at Ponce De Leon and Parkway turned to Charles Allen drive at Ponce de Leon."¹³⁹ What is noted is that Ponce de Leon was the historic marker that separated Atlanta's downtown district from Buckhead, an all white affluent Atlanta neighborhood. However, most whites threatened by housing integration fled to the suburbs. As such, surrounding counties refused to build public housing units, thus adding to the flow of poor blacks to Atlanta.

In regards to white flight, white Atlantans, fearful of the social and economic implication of having black neighbors, moved to the suburbs by the thousands. White flight was a trend best seen in the area of housing. The city lost nearly 10,000 white people every year to suburbs. At the same time, it gained an average of 4,000 blacks per year. Though there were other factors involved—lack of land in the city and higher taxes—the majority of whites left because they did not want integrate. As a result, the percentage of white people living inside the city dropped 61.7 percent in 1960 to 55.2 percent in 1967. The Atlanta Region Metropolitan Planning Commission (now the Atlanta Regional Commission) predicted that the city would be less than 50 percent white by 1972. Despite residential movement outwards, whites kept their jobs that brought them to the inner city everyday. More than two-thirds, approximately 89,000 people of the suburban communities worked in the city. This group made up about one-third of the city's total work force. As such, white flight was a result of black social and physical mobility.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Public Housing Desperate Need for City's Poor, "17.

¹⁴⁰ Whites Leaving for Suburbia, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 17, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

Life in the Atlanta ghettos was not altogether different than other cities. Yet there was little to no contact between the two Atlantas. What the Kerner Report stated about the ghetto was that “white institutions created it, white institutions maintained it, and white society condoned it.”¹⁴¹ As such, Atlanta was trying to fight its blight. The problem to fix what was often deemed unrepairable communities with the city housing code did not erase Atlanta’s slums. The purpose for housing codes was not to eliminate slums but to stabilize good neighborhoods. One approach of ridding the city of slum blight was the use of housing codes to care improvements in its blighted areas. In 1967, city officials found 752 violations and collected \$48,000 in fines. By the end of 1969, Atlanta housing inspectors reviewed every housing unit deemed substandard in the 1960 census, a total of 40,000, in order to prevent a repeat of these housing units in the 1970 census count. Of substandard housing in Atlanta, it was estimated that 75 percent was rental and this fact, presented problems for the city because slumlords fought court orders for as long as a year.¹⁴²

Atlanta City Hall engaged in slum removal to a large extent, although much of it had been in the name of progress rather than improved housing. During the 1960s, only three of twenty displaced Atlantans were moved out because their houses were substandard. The rest had to leave because of governmental expansion—expressways, urban renewal, and school or airport construction.

¹⁴¹ National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, March 1968.

¹⁴² City Fighting Slum Blight, “The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 20, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

Civil Unrest

Many city governments were poorly organized to respond effectively to the needs of ghetto residents, even when these needs were made known to appropriate city officials. As such, negligence on the part of local, state, and federal officials in the form of discrimination acted out through urban rebellions. The Summerhill Riot took place in 1966 as a result of a black man being shot and killed by white police while resisting arrest. The shooting was the boiling point between the city and residents of Summerhill, a poor black area. However, the forces creating the rebellion were far greater than the killing of an African American, it was a sum total of numerous activities that created tension amongst Summerhill's poor blacks and city hall. In order to attract the Milwaukee Braves franchise to Atlanta, Mayor Ivan Allen and the Chamber of Commerce built a stadium on the edge of Summerhill in the Washington-Rawson neighborhood. Originally wealthy whites populated the neighborhood, however, it became a slum when affluent whites left the area for suburbs north of Atlanta after World War II; leaving the neighborhood in disrepair.

In the late 1950s, Washington-Rawson was targeted as part of the city's aggressive urban renewal plans: part of the site was used to construct highway interchanges and overpasses for Interstate 20. Sixty-two acres remained undeveloped, and as the site fell between the commercial business district and Summerhill, Washington-Rawson was deemed a buffer zone. By 1963, the Urban Renewal Administration warned the city that its use of such property for nonresidential purposes jeopardized future federal support. In response, Allen proposed a white housing project in the area as a racial buffer, but black leaders insisted that suitable black housing in the area was a more pressing concern. As such, Allen was caught between the white business elite, which did

not want black housing so close to the business district, and the city's black community, whose support put Allen in office. Thus, Washington-Rawson was, politically and geographically, an ideal site for the stadium. Its construction fulfilled both a key campaign promise and provided a buffer between Summerhill and downtown. Its location was near a 32-lane highway interchanged close to downtown, which provided access.

Residents in Summerhill were disgruntled with City Hall's neglect in providing better services in the community. As early as 1963, residents organized demonstrations and notified Allen of their demands for such services as street cleaning, health and educational facilities, better housing, and more employment opportunities. By 1965, the *Atlanta Constitution* ran a series of articles that revealed the squalor in which some Atlantans lived and a subsequent study by the Community Council of the Atlanta Area (CCAA) revealed that expressway and stadium development crowded ten thousand people into 354 acres. The CCAA stated that the prevailing attitudes were those of despair and hopelessness—and that Summerhill was ripe for violence. As such, Mayor Allen attempted to increase city services to such poor neighborhoods, applied for federal housing aid for the communities, and hired a special assistant to advise him on these community improvements. However, by the early summer of 1966 some of Summerhill's residents had taken to the streets to protest the city's failure to improve living conditions.¹⁴³

On September 6, 1966, just days shy of the 60-year marker of the Atlanta Race Riots; tensions sparked a rebellion due to the killing of black man fleeing arrest by white police. Sentiments of area residents were that this incident was another instance of police brutality by white officers; blight that long plagued the city. An angry crowd gathered at the scene and

¹⁴³ Jodie M. Peeler, *The Greatest Location in the World": A History of the Atlanta Stadium*, 1997, (An Unpublished paper for a graduate course at the University of South Carolina), 4.

refused to obey police demands to disperse. Stokely Carmichael, the chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) went to Summerhill after learning about the shooting. When Allen was informed of the incident and the uprising, he went to the scene hoping to restore peace. Allen found a crowd disgruntled and met with three leaders, encouraging them to bring the crowd to Capitol Street to the stadium. Allen promised that the crowd could discuss their problems with him and elect delegates who could formally present their grievances to the Board of Aldermen. The crowd, frustrated by the tragedy before them began to hurl bricks and bottles while SNCC representatives remarked that Allen promises were the “white man’s trick.” As such, the crowd turned over police cars and set them aflame. Fearful of a massive riot if the violence spread to the community on the other side of the expressway, Allen ordered police to fire tear gas into the crowd.¹⁴⁴

According to Winston Grady-Willis, June 17, 1967 witnessed another uprising in the Dixie Hills community, an isolated West Atlanta neighborhood. The incident stemmed from a melee between black youths and a black security guard at the Flamingo Grill, a shopping center restaurant with more than three hundred on lookers. Ruffled by continuing problems of inadequate sanitation services and the refusal to build playgrounds, concerned citizens organized a town hall meeting at the shopping center to discuss issues one day after the incident. From this, the Dixie Hills’ concerned residents agreed to hold a protest rally on the following evening.¹⁴⁵

Grady-Willis also noted that on the following Monday, June 19, 1967, a black youth was shot and injured by the police while disabling a burglar alarm. The incident was the top agenda

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Winston Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights, 1960-1977*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 129.

item at the protest meeting held at Saint Joseph Baptist Church, attended by several black leaders, including Alderman Q.V. Williams and State Senator Leroy Johnson. Williams and Johnson encouraged the crowd of more than 200 to draft a petition listing their grievances. However, in the crowd were Stokely Carmichael, SNCC, and other grassroots organization members that embodied a more radical approach in dealing with grievances, and as such, the old guard black leaders were greeted with heckling, shouting, and being accused of being white.¹⁴⁶

Grady-Willis also notes that SNCC was represented by Carmichael, Donald Stone, and Ernest Stephens; activist that resided in Dixie Hills. Carmichael, wearing a Malcolm X shirt, encouraged residents “to take to the streets and force the police department to work until they fall in their tracks.” SNCC activists and Dixie Hill’s residents joined the meeting of over a thousand amidst the presence of nine police officers. The officers fired warning shots in an effort to diffuse the escalating situation while citizens hurled bottles and rocks. Heavily armed police reinforcements reestablished crowd but a great deal of damage had been done to patrol cars. According to historian Winston Grady-Willis, of the ten people arrested that night, six were under the age of twenty-one and police arrested Carmichael, Stone and Stephens for inciting a riot.¹⁴⁷

As electrically charged as the Summerhill uprising of 1966 and the Dixie Hills uprising in 1967, the nation watched the city of Atlanta upon the death of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., assassinated by a then unknown gunman on April 4, 1968. King was Atlanta’s most beloved son and an international symbol of human rights and world peace. His death reeked of racial overtones, concluding that his death was at the hands of either Central Intelligence Agency, the

¹⁴⁶ Willis, 129-130.

¹⁴⁷ Willis, 130.

Federal Bureau of Investigation, or white supremacist. As such, it was expected that Atlanta would erupt with violence. In honor of King, a half-million people walked five miles through the heart of Atlanta to mourn his death. As Washington DC and Chicago burned, three racially charged nights past without one significant event in the Atlanta. Mayor Allen Ivan attributed Atlanta's civil reaction in wake of the King assassination to the city's history and atmosphere of good race relations. It is difficult to know or understand black Atlanta's reaction. Maybe the city was emotionally drained.

A smart move on the part of Atlanta's City Hall was that Mayor Allen and Police Chief Herbert Jenkins were among the first to reach the King home after the news arrived that King had been shot and killed. Police immediately surrounded the homes of Dr. King and his parents, to ensure the safety of the families. The mayor arranged a flight to Memphis for Coretta King when it was reported that her husband had died. The official posture of the city was clear and city officials recognized immediately that the world, the nation, black America and Atlanta had lost a great leader. With no room for insensitivity, every official and policeman of the city embodied this position.¹⁴⁸

The city accepted the responsibility because they knew that King's funeral would not be an ordinary one. Allen stated "We knew that the situation required that the city assume the responsibility over and beyond what the family and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference could accomplish." With this, the discipline and coordination that organized hundreds of peaceful protests, the SCLC and other volunteer civil rights groups organized Dr. King's last march. On neighborhood levels, meeting were quickly called by such groups as the

¹⁴⁸ The King Funeral: Why Atlanta Didn't Burn, "The Two Atlantas: An In Depth, Painstaking Examination of the Racial Picture Today in Atlanta," *Atlanta Journal*, May 5-23, 1968, 21, box 1, folders 7-11, *Newsweek Inc.* Collection, EU, MARBL.

Pittsburgh Teen Town. Plans of action were formulated, and within hours, volunteers were moving about their neighborhoods urging them to remain calm.

On the day of King's funeral and for the first time in the city's history, every man in the Atlanta Police Department was working at the same time. Some 875 policemen and 250 firm men were on duty. What was increasingly important to understand was that a well-organized police department could not prevent a riot; it was the will of the people to be peaceful in paying their last respects to Dr. King. Allen's wanted to appease black Atlantans by showing a deep sense of reverence and respect for Martin Luther King Jr.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

RACIAL SYMBOLISM AND ECONOMIC REALITIES: MAYNARD JACKSON AND THE BLACK NEW SOUTH

*All the players, all the hustlers. I'm talking about black man heaven, yah know what I'm saying?
Peace!*¹⁵⁰

Atlanta is often the topic of discussions in terms of black political empowerment and electoral politics since the late 1960s. The city's black political experiences are central when assessing black political power in American cities, in general, and black political power in the post-Civil Rights American South, in particular. In analyzing the evolution of black political might in Atlanta, we must consider the recruitment of black leadership, voting behavior of ordinary citizens, both black and white, and the response of entrenched white economic and political leadership to the changing circumstances. To contextualize black political might in Atlanta is to understand it as a power struggle between whites fighting to maintain their position of power and blacks fighting to escape this dominance. As Blacks made advancements toward political control in Atlanta, counter forces are galvanized within the white community.¹⁵¹

Political scientist Mack Jones noted that Robert Dahl's argument on power called attention to the necessary distinction between the sources or bases of power and the actual

¹⁵⁰ OutKast, "Player's Ball!" *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik LP*, 1993.

¹⁵¹ Mack H. Jones, "Black Political Empowerment in Atlanta" Myth and Reality, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 39, (September 1978); 91-92; Also see the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, Political Participation, 1969.

exercise of power.¹⁵² Often, literature on black political power noted the number of black voters and officeholders and implied that there was an automatic level of political power based on voting, holding office, favorable population distribution and economic wealth. Jones, however, suggested that simple voting, having a black majority, or having black elected and appointed officials was not power; it was when these factors were used to manipulate the political behavior of others, particularly white individuals and groups that indicated power. Therefore, any effort to assess political power of a black community should include conversations that entail the socioeconomic and political problems faced by that community, as well as logical policy alternatives for solving or ameliorating these problems, now popularly described as setting the black agenda.¹⁵³

By the end of the 1960s, Atlanta, Georgia seemed poised as the quintessential southern city for progress. Yet, Atlanta wore the scars brought on by the Summerhill rebellion of 1966, the Dixie Hills rebellion of 1967, and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. Most notably, black Atlanta's greatest acquisition in the 1960s came from voting. Virginia Hein notes that due to the fact that there was little resistance in registering and little retribution towards Atlanta's black voters by whites, black voting registration grew from 41,000 (28.6 percent) in 1961 to 93,000 (44.8 percent in 1969. By 1968, Atlanta's black communities made up 45 percent of Atlanta's population and one-third of the city's registered voters.¹⁵⁴

The strength of Atlanta's black vote claimed victories and gained momentum as the 1960s ended. For white politicians, black bloc voting complicated their futures and forced them

¹⁵² Ibid. See also Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* (July 1955): 202-218. In this article, Dahl argues that it is theoretically useful to conceptualize power as the ability of one party to persuade another to perform an act or acts which it was not otherwise predisposed to do.

¹⁵³ Jones, 93.

¹⁵⁴ Virginia H. Hein, "The Image of "A City Too Busy to Hate": Atlanta in the 1960s" *Phylon* 33, no. 3, (1972).

to reckon with black grassroots leaders. Black political prowess in 1960s Atlanta, as elsewhere, transformed from an entity where one charismatic black leader delivered the entire black vote to forcing white Atlanta to listen to the requests of all facets of the black masses.¹⁵⁵ This shift compelled politicians—both black and white—to court the black vote and forced elected officials and their challengers to campaign amongst the people. Hence, emerged a new coalition emerged called the Metropolitan Atlanta Summit Leadership Congress that galvanized a new era in black Atlanta politics as opposed the Old Guard's Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference, founded in 1964.

Atlanta's changing demographic prompted white political figures to grapple with the real possibility of black opposition from Atlanta's highly developed black community. In 1968, one African American sat on the Atlanta Board of Aldermen, two state senators from Fulton County graced the Georgia Assembly, and the probability of a black mayor seemed reachable. The year 1968 proved to be a watershed moment. Following the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy in April and June of 1968 respectively, attorney Maynard Holbrook Jackson Jr. quit his job and borrowed enough money to pay the qualifying fee on the last possible day and started what was deemed as a quixotic race for the U.S. senate challenging Herman Talmadge, a vestige of plantation politics that served as a negative marker of the old South.

In June of 1968, Jackson challenged segregationist Herman Talmadge, the unchallenged symbol of the old South, for his seat in the U.S. Senate. In Georgia's history, few whites and no African Americans ever thought of challenging a Talmadge. According to Gary Pomerantz in regards to Jackson's perception of the Senator, Talmadge embodied the best and worst of what the South had to offer; he had *savoir-faire* and pedigree, yet used both to keep blacks in

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

economic bondage and political segregation.¹⁵⁶ Talmadge defeated Jackson and kept his seat in the Senate. However, Jackson, young and unknown, became a force to be reckoned with, carrying Atlanta by a majority of six thousand votes. This notoriety set the pace for Maynard Jackson Jr. storied political career and marked Atlanta as a city noted for Black political progress.

Jackson was born in Dallas, Texas on March 23, 1938 to Rev. Dr. Maynard H. Jackson Sr. and Irene Dobbs Jackson. At the age of seven, his family moved to Atlanta, where his father became pastor of Friendship Baptist Church. Jackson came from a family that stressed education and was a fifth generation Georgian. His mother had a Ph.D. degree in French from the University of Toulouse in France. Her five sisters—including internationally acclaimed opera singer Mattiwilda Dobbs—all had Master’s degrees. Jackson’s four sisters had college degrees, one working on a Ph.D. His father’s church was the birthplace of Atlanta University and Spelman College and the home of Morehouse College when it moved its campus from Augusta. Jackson’s great-grand-father—Andrew Jackson—founded Atlanta’s Wheat Street Baptist Church. His maternal grandfather—John Wesley Dobbs—was the grand master of the Prince Hall Masons of Georgia and founder of the Georgia Voters League. He was deemed also the “Unofficial Mayor of Sweet Auburn Avenue, one of black Atlanta’s business thoroughfares. Dobbs, as the endowment secretary for Morehouse College, also raised the first \$1 million for the college.¹⁵⁷

As a Ford Foundation Early Admission Scholar, Jackson graduated from Morehouse College at age 18, with a B.A. in Political Science and History. He later earned the Juris Doctor

¹⁵⁶ Gary Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: A Saga of Race and Family*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 365.

¹⁵⁷ “Maynard Jackson: A Personal Profile,” January 1990, Box 14, Pomerantz Papers, Emory University: Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library (EU: MARBL).

(cum laude) from North Carolina Central University School of Law, where he served as the president of the Student Bar Association and captain of the school's national moot court team, which shared first-place regional honors with the University of Virginia law school. Between graduation from Morehouse College and entering law school, Jackson was a claims examiner for a year and a half and an assistant district sales manager for a national publication firm where he was one of the top salesmen. After law school, Jackson practiced law with the National Labor Relations Board, which offered legal services to low-income Atlantans. In 1968, Jackson left the National Labor Relations Board and joined the Emory Community Legal Service Center, which provided legal aid for persons unable to afford it. He developed an interest in the representation of poor people with a special interest in housing. Most notably in this position, Jackson filed cases against the DeKalb and Atlanta Housing authorities restraining them from evicting indigent tenants from public housing projects for two reasons:

1. On the grounds they have a right to a hearing before eviction.
2. On the grounds that Georgia's so-called "double bond" law was unconstitutional because it requires that people evicted must post bond equal to double their rent for a period of time—which means poor people can't fight eviction.

Jackson later helped to found Jackson, Patterson, Parks and Franklin law firm.¹⁵⁸

In 1968, Jackson's campaign for the U.S. senate was deemed to be more foolish than it was met with resistance. At that time, Edward Brooke of Massachusetts was the only African American serving in the U.S. senate. Jackson had entered the senate campaign on impulse, and had not consulted with black leaders in Atlanta. In his haste or naiveté, Jackson was sure of support from black Atlanta's leadership; however, his loss indicated that much of black Atlanta's old guard supported Talmadge. The fact that Atlanta's old guard supported a staunch

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

segregationists like Talmadge proves that the Senator had strong ties within the black community. In private, Talmadge did personal favors for them in return for their vote. Nevertheless, poorer blacks were not privy to these favors. This further proves Tomiko Brown-Nagin's notion of "Atlanta style politics of bi-racial negotiation."¹⁵⁹

In 1969, four candidates ran in Atlanta's mayoral race. Rodney Cook, head of an insurance agency, was a self-proclaimed white-Anglo-Saxon protestant republican backed by Atlanta's business establishment, including the endorsement of Atlanta Newspapers Inc. Sam Massell, the two-term Vice-Mayor under Ivan Allen, was a wealthy Jewish realtor and Democrat credited with establishing a Community Relations Commission, which divvied up an over-sized ward to allow more black representation and pushed for equal employment and City services. In his 1965 Vice-mayoral campaign, Massell amassed seventy-two percent of the citywide vote. G. Everett Millican was a 72 year-old alderman that embodied his slogan calling for "Law and Order with Justice." Millican spanned generations and was considered to be liberal. In 1954, he was one of two members of the Board of Regents to vote against closing Georgia schools, a stance in which he was proud. When hippies and policemen violently clashed in Piedmont Park ten days before the election in 1968, Millican consciously disapproved of the explosive situation. Lastly, Dr. Horace E. Tate became the first African American to seek the office of Mayor in Atlanta. Tate was a former schoolteacher and principal that had earned a bachelors degree from Fort Valley State College, master's degree from Atlanta University, and a doctorate in education from the University of Kentucky. He held a seat on the Atlanta School Board. He later served as the Director of the National Education Association and was elected to the Georgia State senate

¹⁵⁹ Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Class Actions: The Impact of Black and Middle Class Conservatism on Civil rights Lawyering in a New South Political Economy, Atlanta, 1946-1979*, (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2002).

in 1974.¹⁶⁰ Tate's run for mayor foreshadowed the tensions that would emerge during Jackson's later campaigns. His experience is worth considerable attention.

Tate's campaign slogan was "Now is the Time!" and his campaign asserted, "A vote for Tate will give Atlanta a new image and a new thrust." If elected as Mayor, Tate promised:

1. An involvement of all citizens in seeking better racial relations.
2. A quality educational program for all pupils.
3. Fair and equal employment policy.
4. Decent, adequate and open housing.
5. Strong and strongly enforced housing code.
6. Equal order and equal law.
7. Living wage for City employees.
8. Elimination of police brutality.
9. Uniform and equal services-City wide
10. A good system of transportation.
11. Atlanta to become the Convention Center of the South.
12. Atlanta to become the International Airport of the South.¹⁶¹

His political participation included working for the passage of statewide legislation designed to benefit parents, teachers and students of Georgia. Tate appeared before numerous legislative committees to speak in favor of progressive legislation. He accompanied citizens to Aldermanic meetings to aid them in securing their rights as Atlanta citizens. Lastly, Tate directed Voter Registration Campaigns and participated in political clinics designed to acquaint him with problems in government.

¹⁶⁰ "H.E. Tate For Mayor", Pamphlet, 1969, Box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

Atlanta's black leadership refused to support Rodney Cook, the candidate for mayor endorsed by the white business elite, and instead supported Sam Massell. It was widely believed that the only reason for Massell's lack of support by the white civic and business elite was due to anti-Semitism. For a black endorsement, Horace Tate was a very capable mayoral candidate. However, like Jackson's run for the U.S. Senate, his candidacy was met with great resistance from black Atlanta's leadership. As Tate entered the race, there were charges from other black leaders that he had betrayed them by announcing his bid before they decided whether it was time for a black mayor, and more important, whether he was the right candidate to break the mayoral color barrier. Black old guard powers resented new movements towards power and did all that they could to quell Tate's run. This meant endorsements of Sam Massell from Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr. and black state senator Leroy Johnson. Although the Southern Christian Leadership Coalition's Reverend Ralph Abernathy, Coretta King and Julian Bond endorsed Tate, as well as Jesse Jackson, activists Hosea Williams and Reverend Joseph Boone, these endorsements came in the eleventh hour and were less than enthusiastic. However, what was clear was that Tate was eager to serve the poor, the hungry, the needy, and the uneducated. Black Atlanta's leadership was more concerned with electability and in the closing weeks of the campaign, Sam Massell made that his platform. Massell acquired forty to forty-five percent of the black vote. On October 7, 1969, only 46 percent of Atlanta's eligible voters turned out on a clear, cool, autumn day. Massell won the election and became Atlanta's first Jewish mayor by receiving 29,971 (31.1 percent) of the votes; Rodney Cook received 25,830 (26.8 percent); Horace Tate received 22,193 (23.1 percent); and G. Everett Millican received 17,481 (18.2 percent).¹⁶²

¹⁶² "Mayor's Race," Nation Alpern, Atlanta Clift, *Newsweek* Atlanta Telex, October 9, 1969 and "Rev. Jackson Says SCLC Supporting Tate for Mayor," 2 October 1969, *Atlanta Journal*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

Gary Pomerantz notes that for the position of Atlanta's Vice Mayor, it was widely believed that two African Americans, state Senator Leroy Johnson and Vernon Jordan of the Southern Regional Council, would run, pushing Maynard Jackson Jr. to seek a spot on the aldermanic board. However, Jackson had his own ambitions and discretely laid the foundation for his emergence in Atlanta's city politics by forming a skeletal campaign organization. He proved that he could win votes in his run against Herman Talmadge. On March 7, 1969, Jackson announced his candidacy for vice mayor of Atlanta at the famous Paschal's restaurant, in Atlanta's West End. The Vice Mayoral position provided segues for the 1973 mayoral race. As Jackson announced his candidacy, Atlanta's black leaders were gathered at the Hyatt Regency to hear M. Carl Holman of the National Urban Coalition speak about establishing a local branch in Atlanta. Holman was the former deputy director of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and former *Atlanta Inquirer* editor, and gained the attention of Atlanta's black leadership. While meeting with Holman, black leaders seethed at Jackson's bravado. According to Pomerantz, he was running for the second time in a year without consulting them and many vowed not to support him. In prior years, the Atlanta Negro Voter's League (ANVL) ran by John Wesley Dobbs, Jackson's grandfather, and Attorney Austin T. Walden determined which candidates the black voters supported. However, Walden's death in 1965, along with the growing number and independence of black candidates, reduced the ANVL's influence.¹⁶³ More important were the shifts in legacies left by Dobbs and Walden through the ANVL.

According to Pomerantz, the power of the ANVL in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s shifted and left a very capable Maynard Jackson out of circles with black Atlanta's power brokers.

Consequently, Jackson campaigned as a maverick. He believed that his future in politics would

¹⁶³ Pomerantz, 383-384; Just as Horace Tate, Atlanta's Black Leadership wanted Jackson to suffer a defeat in order to prove their influence in the City's politics.

not fare well at the behest of Atlanta's black elite. He did consult with a group of black ministers that knew his father; however, he never consulted with the ANVL and as such, Atlanta's black leadership felt disrespected¹⁶⁴

Pomerantz asserts that in 1969, the ANVL leadership comprised of Warren Cochrane of the Butler Street YMCA, a YMCA founded in 1894 for African Americans and located near historic Auburn Avenue; Reverend William Holmes Borders of Wheat Street Baptist Church; Jesse Hill, Chairman of Atlanta Life Insurance; Georgia state senator Leroy Johnson; architect Herman Russell; activist Mrs. Johnnie Yancey; Alderman Q.V. Williamson, and Lonnie King of the Atlanta NAACP chapter. It was clear that Atlanta's black leadership was not interested in forming a local branch of the National Urban Coalition, an urban advocacy organization created to bridge cultural and racial divides in American cities. The ANVL leadership felt that it was now time to assert black political power, and the consensus was that it was not the right time for a black candidate to run for mayor or vice mayor. Vernon Jordan, an Atlanta native and of the Southern Regional Commission, was viewed by the ANVL as the ideal black candidate for political office. Yet, he decided not to run for mayor or the congressional seat for Atlanta's Fifth District held by Republican Fletcher Thompson. Nationally, black political figures such as Carl Stokes of Cleveland and Richard Hatcher of Gary, Indiana had both been elected mayors in 1967. Former policeman and City councilman Tom Bradley had a strong showing in Los Angeles. In Atlanta, state senator Leroy Johnson had decided not to run. According to Pomerantz, Johnson, the son of an Atlanta mortician was a protégé of A.T. Walden and was the first black legislator elected in Georgia since Reconstruction. Clearly, if there were to be a black candidate to run in 1969, Atlanta's black leadership preferred Vernon Jordan or Leroy Johnson. To Atlanta's black leadership, Leroy Johnson was electable. With Walden's help, Johnson

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

became the first black prosecutor hired in Fulton County, Georgia and was capable of delivering large blocs of black votes in City, county and statewide elections. Feeling entitled to a black candidacy as mayor, Johnson felt that when the time was right to run for mayor of Atlanta, he had earned the right to be that man or would broker the person that would be.¹⁶⁵

Like Massell, Maynard Jackson was elected Vice Mayor of Atlanta with a healthy majority of votes cast October 7, 1969. At the age of 31, the young attorney pushed ahead of white Gulf Oil vice president Milton Farris, as well as candidates H.J. “Jack” Carson and Jacob Davis. Victory came as no surprise as most of Jackson’s staff predicted that he would carry anywhere from 56-59 percent of the vote. Polls show that Jackson actually carried 58 percent, as opposed to Farris, who carried 38.9 percent; Carson carried 1.94 percent; and Davis carried .78 percent. Jackson received one-third of the vote in predominantly white areas.

On January 5, 1970, Maynard Jackson Jr. was sworn in as Vice Mayor of Atlanta. He pledged to make the vice mayor’s office the “voice of the people” and developed an extensive chain of communications between government and constituents. He worked for a City ombudsman with subpoena power and established a civic organization-sponsored complaint office. On the day after his election, he immediately pushed for the publication of aldermen’s vote on important issues. Jackson’s election was a victory for Atlanta’s increasing black population, but blacks could not take full credit. A deciding factor was the percentage of votes that Jackson acquired in predominantly white precincts. He received votes in almost every predominantly white precinct. For example, in one precinct where there was one black voter, Jackson received 40 percent of that precinct’s vote. In predominantly black precincts, Jackson

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

had overwhelming success, getting an average of 96 percent of the vote. He had broad based supporters; young and old; rich and poor; black and white.¹⁶⁶

On March 16, 1970, shortly after the election of Massell and Jackson, members of the City employees union voted to take Tuesday, March 17 off to demonstrate against the City's inaction in granting them pay raises. City employees vowed to remain off their jobs unless the City acted. The 2,000 City workers affiliated with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) were urged to take part in the "holiday" and union officials hinted at a protracted strike and a march on City Hall. The strike vote came after a union request for a pay raise for all 8,000 City workers was rejected. From the onset, Massell argued that pay raises were not attainable unless the City was given the funds from the Georgia General Assembly. The strike vote was taken hours after the full Board of Aldermen rejected a union request for a one-step across the board pay increase that would boost each City employees' annual salary by an average of \$300. A pay raise for City workers would cost the City \$2.5 million.¹⁶⁷ The members of the AFSCME demanded:

1. "That the minimum wage for employees of the City of Atlanta be increased to from \$1.67 per hour to \$2.13 per hour effective on the first pay period following the next regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen.
2. That each City employee be provided \$5,000 of life insurance coverage free of cost to the employee within [their] present insurance plan, replacing the premium contribution made by the employee toward \$2,500 coverage, to be made effective on or around July 1, 1970.

¹⁶⁶ "Jackson Wins: Makes History," 8 October 1969, *Atlanta Journal*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹⁶⁷ "City Union on 'Holiday': 2,000 Asked to Stay Home," 17 March 1970, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

3. That all employees absent without official leave on this date will return to work at the next regular work day without pay for time absent during the work stoppage.”¹⁶⁸

By March 18, members of the City employees union voted to reject city wage offers and extend their “holiday” into a full-fledged strike. At City Hall, Massell commented “City government must prepare itself to operate over an undetermined period of time with minimal sanitation service supplemented by contracted workers for commercial firms.”¹⁶⁹ However, what was most important was the quagmire, that later became a showdown between the AFSCME and Sam Massell. Unlike President Nixon, Massell decided to take on the union for leading an illegal strike. According to labor historian Joseph McCartin, Massell, early on, threatened to fire strikers if they did not end their work stoppage. When they rebuffed, he sanctioned 1,400 dismissal notices, drawing him vehement disapproval from civic groups and churches. Leading the criticism of Massell were civil rights activists defending black strikers who insisted that the mayor “find some way to solve the problem short of tearing the City asunder.”¹⁷⁰ Jackson attacked Massell, calling the sanitation workers’ wages “a disgrace before God” and insisted that the mayor negotiate. Massell backed down under this pressure. On April 22, after thirty-seven days of striking, Massell rehired strikers and gave them a 4.3 percent pay raise. Later, most analysts agreed that Jackson played a key role in blocking Massell’s bid to replace the workers.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ A Letter from Claude Holt and Morton Shapiro to Joel Stokes, 16 January 1970, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹⁶⁹ “Strike Called By City Union,” *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹⁷⁰ Joseph A. McCartin, “Fire the Hell Out Them’: Sanitation Workers’ Struggles and the Normalization of the Striker Replacement Strategy in the 1970s,” *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas*, 2, issue 3, (Fall 2005): 69-70.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Within the first 100 days of the administration, it was clear that Massell and Jackson were destined to be adversaries. Pomerantz notes that Jackson immediately, tried to force himself into negotiations with the striking city sanitation workers. He recommended binding arbitration, mediation, and lastly suggested an independent fact finder to help settle the strike, but the city rejected each. Jackson was convinced that the strike could be settled in a matter of days.¹⁷² He prided himself on being a man of the people. Because the majority of Atlanta's sanitation workers were black, Jackson, saw a place where he could assert the will of his constituency. However, this situation provides back drop that would resurface later in his mayoral tenure.

Maynard Jackson had a propensity for making headlines. In May of 1970, he called for city department heads charged with racism to prove their innocence or face firing. He also charged the city hiring practices with discrimination. From this, Massell was convinced that every political move Jackson made was for the sole purpose of benefiting blacks. In a speech given at the Butler Street YMCA and with a semblance to Booker T. Washington's *Atlanta Compromise* in 1895, Massell warned black Atlantans that their preoccupation with gaining political control of Atlanta could ruin the city. Massell stated "the word around town is that you and I.....the black and white liberal leadership of Atlanta, are committed to Atlanta becoming an all black City....what a terribly confined and costly ambition that would represent." Massell cited Newark, New Jersey as a city with similar trends as to what Atlanta could become if white middle class families continued to leave the city and poverty stricken blacks continued to take their place. With a declining tax base, Atlanta's next move was to annex neighboring municipalities. Massell urged blacks to "think white," to make the City more attractive to

¹⁷² Pomerantz, 393.

encourage white families to remain in the City.¹⁷³ It was clear that Massell was desperate and his vice mayor gave him no consolation. Jackson condemned Massell for his antics and indifference towards poor blacks, a good portion of black Atlantans.¹⁷⁴

According to Pomerantz, the Metro Atlanta Rapid Train Authority (MARTA) referendum passed in Fulton and DeKalb counties in 1971, but only after hard dealings and black leaders received certain assurances. Of these assurances were better services in black areas and a promise that affirmative action programs, compliant with federal guidelines would be applied to MARTA hires and contracts. During the 1972-73 school year, Atlanta's NAACP branch president and former sit-in leader Lonnie King negotiated with white leaders to relinquish his demand for broad scale busing in the City in return for an extraordinary desegregation of the City school system's administrative staff, including the appointment of Atlanta first black superintendent. To blacks, King's deal undermined the NAACP's mission, and as such, they removed him from his post. Whites comprised only 23 percent of the City's student population and forced busing diminished that number even more.¹⁷⁵ The rising power and influence of Atlanta's highly developed black middle class was evident in all of these political negotiations, including the mayoral showdown between Sam Massell and Maynard Jackson Jr. that would take place in 1973.

In a speech given on March 28, 1973 from the Aldermanic Chamber at Atlanta's City Hall, Maynard Jackson announced his candidacy to run for Mayor of Atlanta. In his own press conference, Jackson stated,

¹⁷³ Ibid: See also Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1989), 80.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

I repeat now what I said four years ago when I declared my candidacy for the office of vice mayor—the people of Atlanta will speak again this year and I consider the office for which I am running a challenge which I am honored to accept. As your vice mayor, I have stood in this historic chamber countless times before. I have worked here to forge honorable policies of progress and a better life.

I have come to my decision, in large part, because so many of you have urged me to run, so many of you who come from all walks of life, who come from every corner of our great City, and who represent every racial, religious, economic and age group.

My decision comes, also, because I have listened attentively as you have kept me informed of your profound concerns and anxieties about the quality of life in our City. You have continually called to my attention the need to restore confidence in government in Atlanta. You have impressed upon me with fierce urgency the need to bring honesty back to government, and you have firmly stated the need to re-establish responsive government so as to render those basic City services which are so necessary to the public.

I have listened to many thousands of you as I have walked the street of Atlanta, attended your meetings, appeared at schools and churches and visited you homes and your places of business and labor. I promise to keep listening to you as I campaign. I have agreed with much of what you have brought to my attention. I have tried to honor your communications to me by articulating your hurts and your hopes. I shall continue to do so.¹⁷⁶

Simultaneously, most of Atlanta's black leadership, privately annoyed by Jackson's non-conformist personality, endorsed Sam Massell for a second term as mayor. Massell's deal with Atlanta's black leadership was that he would step aside and make way for a black mayor in 1977. Jackson was unwilling to wait for this moment and felt that it brought negative attention to his cause.¹⁷⁷ However, Jackson's candidacy announcement lent credence to his grassroots base,

¹⁷⁶ "Announcement for Mayoral Candidacy," Speech, 28 March 1973, box 1, Maynard Jackson Collection, Atlanta University Center (AUC).

¹⁷⁷ Pomerantz, 400.

comprised of young and old; rich and poor; black and white. Jackson's interaction with all Atlantans threatened the old guard's style of elite interracial negotiations.¹⁷⁸

Jackson had studied Atlanta's changing demographics that faired in his favor. According to Pomerantz, Atlanta's reputation as a Mecca of opportunity attracted young, ambitious, and educated blacks to the City. With white flight at an all-time high nationwide, Atlanta's black population grew from 38 percent in 1960, to 45 percent in 1968, to 54 percent in 1973. Thus, Maynard Jackson declared Atlanta to be the best City in America for black people to live. He was fully aware of the fact that black voting strength in the City had reached 48 percent and was still rising.¹⁷⁹

A Black New South

To Jackson, Atlanta's changing demographics were evident with a nation-wide trend that affected the whole South through the reverse migration of blacks from the urban North, Midwest, and West back to a black new South.¹⁸⁰ Black migration from the South to the North started after the Civil War and heightened during World War I as floods and the boll weevil devastated southern farming and the northern industrialization attracted black workers. Indeed the greatest out migration of the Blacks from the South to the North occurred in the 1960s. By the 1970s, Atlanta had become symbolic of a black new South and a land of opportunity for blacks as seen in Atlanta, where entrepreneurship and political ambitions flourished. According to the 1971

¹⁷⁸ Brown-Nagin, *Class Actions*.

¹⁷⁹ Pomerantz, 400.

¹⁸⁰ I assert that the black New South focuses on the South after the passing of civil rights legislation where black political empowerment and power, as well as entrepreneurship were fostered. This black new South was as much framed by geography as it was in time period.

U.S. Census projection, 108,000 blacks left other parts of the country to settle in the black new South in 1971, up from 97,000 in 1970. Studies showed that between the years of 1970-1973, 247,000 blacks moved to the South where 166,000 moved out of the South during the same period. This indicated the major shift where many people returning were either born or reared in the South. However, about one-third of them had never lived in the South before.¹⁸¹

By and large, most blacks returning to the black new South were young professionals moving to larger urban areas in the South such as Atlanta, Nashville, Memphis, and Birmingham. For the most part, returning blacks did not perceive the South as an idyllic promised land free of racial strife, crime and other social ills, even though Atlanta had a different image. However, there were two major factors responsible for the South's new attractiveness. First, there was a growing disenchantment with the North's social ills; second, blacks noticed changes in the South's social climate as civil rights legislation knocked down the rigid racial policies that marked the racial subordination of the Old South. In 1974, there were nearly two thousand black elected officials across the South, including a number of black mayors.¹⁸² Thus, underneath the popular image of a Black New South lay concrete evidence of changes in civil and political rights.

Despite the South's remaining racial problems such as de facto racial prejudices, blacks still regarded it as a "last frontier," a place of hope in contrast to the gloomy despair of the urban North. To many northern blacks, a black new South City such as Atlanta offered more in terms of private entrepreneurship and the possibility of equal government services. There was a

¹⁸¹ "Blacks Return to South," *Newsweek Atlanta Telex*, 20 February 1974, box 3, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

healthier belief about survival coupled with a lived experience that the urban North was not the “promised land” that it once had been for blacks seeking refuge from Jim Crow.¹⁸³

For southern-born or educated black intellectuals, a primary reason for returning to the South was to reverse a trend known as the “black brain drain” that occurred as a result of segregation. Before blacks were allowed to attend or be employed at state supported and traditionally white institutions of higher learning, large northern universities hired away top faculty from the southern historically black colleges. For many, teaching in the North and the West was abstract, and many wanted to put theory in practice. In the early 1970s, there was a widespread belief that the South was changing more rapidly than the North and that Atlanta was the best place to live for a person of any race.¹⁸⁴ Also, state supported and traditionally white institutions of higher learning had integrated, taking some of the highest performing students from black institutions. Because good black professors attracted good black students, a move to preserve the tradition and history of historically black colleges was underway.

Clearly, a black new South was the best place for black economic development. The frustrating truth about politics and economics in the North was that the formation of black political power was mostly symbolic because economic power was not its foundation. In the North, there were structured constraints on the creativity and opportunities of black business owners. They were usually allowed to enter service kinds of operations relative to what was already established. It was difficult to attain land, the foundation to economic development in the North, because there was very little of it. With black land ownership in the South and the opportunities to broaden it, Atlanta seemed a place where blacks could get in at the ground level

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

relative to business and economic development, which was impossible to do in New York and Chicago. In 1950, blacks owned or partly owned more than 12 million acres of land in the South, but by 1964, this was down to 7.2 million acres, a 40 percent decline. The Emergency Land Fund was organized for the specific purpose to address the problem of declining black land ownership and for providing assistance to those who wanted to remain on their land.¹⁸⁵

Atlanta had always had its share of college students from the North and West, many were the children of alumni, but the number of northern born black students steadily increased. Many stayed in the city after finishing college, which added to black reverse migration movement to the South. Of these transplants, many found it comforting that they were able to operate in black institutions, not only colleges, but also other kinds of black owned and affiliated ventures. Atlanta was also the site for rapid industrial expansion that created jobs for the whole region and opened employment opportunities to blacks.

A convincing measure to prove the viability for Jackson's campaign, according to Pomerantz, was a meeting held in 1972 with his cousin Bill Clement Jr., a Wharton Business school graduate and stock broker; his new law partner David Franklin, and Chuck Williams, a builder of a black public relations firm in Atlanta. Together, the foursome discussed campaign strategies that would make political history. Franklin became the key strategist. An entertainment lawyer, Franklin's political experience had amounted to grassroots campaign organizing.¹⁸⁶ In 1961, he helped to establish a Muggsy Smith student group that led a race against Ivan Allen Jr. In 1965, he helped Julian Bond win a seat in the Georgia Legislature. As

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Pomerantz, 401.

part of his work for the National Urban Coalition, Franklin helped with the 1967 Carl Stokes' mayoral victory in Cleveland.¹⁸⁷

What some deemed as maturation since his 1968 run for the U.S. Senate, Jackson, for the first time in three campaigns, solicited support from Atlanta's black leadership during the 1973 election. Jackson knew that in order to win this race, he needed the help of black Atlanta's old guard. Initially he was met with the same resistance that he endured in the past, particularly from Jesse Hill. Pomerantz notes that in order to galvanize the vote, Jackson needed to coax Hill for an endorsement. Hill had been a key figure in the 1972 campaign when Andrew Young campaigned in a redrawn district and became the first black congressman from the Deep South since Reconstruction. Young's victory spoke to Hill's political clout amongst Atlanta's black leadership. Hill's endorsement lent credibility, money and votes.¹⁸⁸

Hill was not captivated with Jackson's plans to run for mayor and thought that 1977 was a better time for a black mayor in Atlanta. Twelve years senior to Jackson, it was evident that there was a generational gap between the two. Hill was entrenched in black Atlanta and felt that a black mayor would upset plan for black political progress. However, Pomerantz asserts that Jackson's sentiments were that Hill embodied an old mentality that took handouts from the white power structure at the cost of black

¹⁸⁷ "Ivan Ho," *Time Magazine*, September 17, 1965: Milton M. ("Muggsy") Smith was an Atlanta insurance salesman who made a name during 16 years in the state legislature trying to repeal every segregation law in Georgia. Smith, who had run against Allen in 1961, never had a chance.

¹⁸⁸ Pomerantz, 401; According to Pomerantz, Jesse Hill was the Chief Executive Officer of Atlanta Life Insurance, which, with \$85 million in assets, was the largest privately held black business in the nation. Over the years, Hill had proven his willingness to help those laboring in the Civil Rights Movement. He had supported the AUC students during the sit-ins in the 1960s, at times paying their bail. In 1960, he co-founded *The Atlanta Inquirer*, a progressive black newspaper to serve as an alternative to the more conservative *Atlanta Daily World*. During the early 1970s, Hill became the first African American named to the Georgia Board of Regents and to the board of Rich's Department Store.

political power. Jackson thought that blacks should assert themselves, shoulder responsibility, and work for coalitions with whites. Jackson's campaign threatened Hill and the elite black power structure.¹⁸⁹

Noting Jackson's popularity amongst all of Atlanta's voters, key strategist David Franklin commissioned a survey of 618 voters, which consisted of 400 white and 218 blacks. The results of the survey indicated that in a field of six possible candidates, Jackson would receive 45 percent of the votes, more than double that of runner-up Sam Massell. Also, the poll showed that in a nose-to-nose election, Jackson would receive 54 percent of the total votes, Massell would receive 28 percent of the vote and 18 percent were undecided. Lastly, the Gallup pole suggested that Jackson would receive 95 percent of the black vote. Most notably, an overwhelming majority of whites surveyed in the poll disagreed with the notion that Jackson was "too radical." With this information, Franklin and Jackson requested another meeting with Jesse Hill at the Atlanta Urban League Office. As they presented this data, it was clear that Maynard Jackson should run for mayor. Hill took the results of the survey and presented them to the Action Forum, an interracial group of business leaders, founded in 1971 by Milton Lane and black realtor Bill Calloway, to bridge the city's racial chasm. Forum members were shocked with the results of the survey.¹⁹⁰

According to Pomerantz, Georgia state senator Leroy Johnson vowed to support Jackson's run for mayor; however, in March of 1973, he put his bid in to run for mayor as well. Interestingly, the race between Jackson and Johnson, spoke to more than Atlanta's top seat, it spoke to a shift in black leadership. Jackson was the grandson of ANVL co-founder John Wesley Dobbs. Johnson was the protégé of ANVL co-founder A.T. Walden. It was clear that just 27 years after the founding of the ANVL, a split between the legacies left by Dobbs and Walden manifested itself in a black power struggle for the Atlanta top seat that embodied different styles and politics. Both Jackson and Johnson were alums of Morehouse College, an institution of higher learning noted for the great leadership in Benjamin Mays as well as the tutelage of other alums such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Jackson and Johnson made a

¹⁸⁹ Pomerantz, 402.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

joint campaign appearance and debate before 250 students at the Atlanta University Center. From this, a mock election was held at the AUC where nearly 2,400 students, faculty, and staff voted. The results showed that of the 2,400 votes, 2,113 votes (84 percent) were cast for Jackson. Hill, seeing these results asked David Franklin to commission another poll to gauge what effects Johnson's candidacy would have on Jackson's candidacy. The survey was conducted in April of 1973 and resulted with Jackson receiving 80 percent of the vote to Johnson's 2 percent. Hill then met with members of the white business elite, to solicit their support for Jackson. In years past, the white business elite brought their candidates to black leaders in order to get black votes. However, Maynard Jackson was different kind of candidate, and as such, Hill brought the black candidate to the white business elite to get their endorsement. The sentiment was that many of the white business elite did not want to endorse Jackson's candidacy, however, it was clear to them that Maynard Jackson was a force to be reckoned with.¹⁹¹

The major platform for Jackson, Johnson, and Johnson during the 1973 campaign was crime. In the 1960s, Atlanta was deemed as one of the most crime plagued cities in the U.S. However, a key component of Jackson's campaign was building an interracial coalition, which in other ways, allowed him to bypass discussions on issues of race with white constituency. Jackson worked to calm fears amongst whites feeling that if elected, he would manipulate policies that would avenge white racism endured by blacks that marked race relations in the American South.¹⁹²

On October 16, 1973, at the age of 35, Maynard Jackson became the first black mayor of Atlanta and of any major southern city in general. His platform asserted that Atlanta needed "leaders not politicians." Jackson was the South's first black, big-time, urban mayor. In his first weeks as mayor, Jackson came up against similar demands from the same sanitation force as Massell did in 1970. Yet, this time as management and as the city's top official, Jackson had to tone down his support. He forced the

¹⁹¹ Pomerantz, 405.

¹⁹² Pomerantz, 407.

City council to pass a pay raise agreed upon by the workers but at the expense of 480 sanitation jobs.

Jackson discovered a state law that prohibited him from isolating a single union.¹⁹³

With Jackson, as with most black mayors, the most crippling political handicap was the existence of extensive economic resources outside of the mayor's control. These resources moved between federal and state governments, as well as private capital controlled by business establishment, which were more than often white in each City. As such, virtually all urban leaders were convinced that Washington held the key to how cities coped with problems. But Jackson, in Atlanta, was considered to be the litmus test. He took charge of an economically, healthy, upbeat City where he reorganized the charter to give him powers that his predecessors did not have. His January inaugural was more of a coronation than it was an inauguration, symbolizing the thrust of interracial benevolence that put him in office. The Atlanta power structure's nervousness stemmed from his youth as well as rumors that Jackson established a City welfare slush fund to take care of emergencies in Atlanta's black community. His appointment of executive assistant Reginald Eaves, his college classmate and chief administrative officer Jule Sugarman who worked for New York mayor John Lindsay in Sin City. Initially Jackson had no trouble handling Atlanta's aspiring black political leaders, and his standing in the black community, by and large, was very solid. However, blacks were nervous about Jackson's retention of the white police chief, John Inman and were curious to see how he would stay on the good side of Atlanta's powerful business community. As political scientist Mack Jones asserted, "dealing with the charge that if you make a move toward black interests, you are undermining economic interests and the City's future."¹⁹⁴ The second part of this chapter will focus on six areas where race was the central factor of tumult. These areas were: the city charter; urban renewal; public housing; public transportation, annexation and consolidation, the Sanitation Strike of 1977, and Airport Annexation. These areas were critical in reshaping of black Atlanta as well as

¹⁹³ "Maynard Jackson: A Personal Profile," January 1990, box 14, Pomerantz Papers, EU: MARBL; See Roger M. Williams, "America's Black Mayors: Are They Saving the Cities," *Saturday Review World*, 4 May 1974, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

¹⁹⁴ Roger Williams, "America's Black Mayors: Are They Saving the Cities," *Saturday Review World*, 4 May 1974, 12, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

cultivating relationships between Jackson's administration and the white business elite. Nevertheless, these areas were reactionary measures that became pertinent only when they arose. This suggests that Jackson's administration did not promote its own agenda for Atlanta, but reacted to agendas staged by prior administrations.

City Charter

According to Mack Jones, before Jackson, Atlanta had a weak mayor-council form of government where the mayor appointed aldermanic committees annually. The committee chairmen worked closely with the heads of various city departments. During the first session of each new aldermanic board, the mayor appointed small committees of three to five members, and assigned at least one black alderman to each committee. It was noted that ten of the fifteen committees had only three members. Giving blacks considerable leverage, the vice-mayor and the one black alderman dead-locked committees and in the case of a split between the two whites, black members prevailed. Black aldermen took advantage of this situation and pushed for ending discrimination within city departments.¹⁹⁵

Jones asserted that the political negotiations for the new city charter had the most sweeping implications towards race and politics in Atlanta because the new government approved by the charter was based on a completely redistricted city with radical changes in the process for choosing council members. The power relationship between the mayor and the

¹⁹⁵ Jones, 104-105.

council was distorted significantly and the administration elected in 1973 had responsibility for completely restructuring the city's administrative inner workings.¹⁹⁶

The essence of a new city charter, as well as the actions through which one was adopted was determined by the state legislature. However, members of the county delegations in the state house and senate approved measures that applied to a particular county, and any new charter had to have the support of black representatives from Fulton County. Consequently, when the general assembly appointed a commission to develop a new draft charter, care was taken to insure that the commission had significant black representation.

Jones showed that Jackson's draft charter reflected compromises on certain issues such as the size of the new council and members. For example, other highly contentious points were new sources of revenue for the city and the desegregation of the public school system. In one instance, white business and the commercial elite, doubtlessly with an eye toward the future, managed to have the charter reflect their particular interests by specifically calling for a director to head the department of finance who would be appointed by the mayor, but responsible to the council. Since it was generally understood that the then-incumbent head of the finance department, long considered a friend of the city's business interests, would become the director, the control of the city government's finances would remain in friendly hands no matter who the new mayor happened to be. Moreover, the finance department and the law department were the only city departments specifically authorized in the charter and, therefore, could not be eliminated by the mayor and the council acting jointly.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

According to Jones, the new charter adopted in 1973 was critically important as it provided the formal setting for black political empowerment. Under the old charter when members of the board of aldermen were elected at large, five of the eighteen aldermen were black. Under the new charter twelve of the eighteen councilmen were chosen from single-member districts and the other six ran at large, but for designated places based upon paired districts. With the impending black voting majority, when all council members were chosen at large, blacks controlled all council positions as whites had done under the old system. Though whites still had a slight voting margin in 1973, blacks had sizeable majorities in seven of the twelve single-member districts and a slight majority in an eighth.¹⁹⁸

Under the old charter as Jones asserts, Atlanta had a weak mayor form of government with members of the aldermanic board supervising the day-to-day operations of city departments. Black aldermen had used this power to force department to give greater respect to black interests. The new charter, which prescribed strict separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, made such supervision a function solely of the mayor's office.¹⁹⁹

Perhaps the most important feature of the new charter converted the old ceremonial position of vice-mayor into the president of council with significant legislative powers. The president of council appointed all councilman committees, presided over council meetings, and supervised the newly created councilmen staff. These powers would make him the second most important official in city government. The new charter also called for a nine-member school board with six members to be elected from single member districts and three chosen at large.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

The approval of the new charter in 1973 by the state legislature signaled the end of centuries of white political domination in Atlanta in particular and to a lesser degree in the urban south generally.²⁰⁰

Urban Renewal

Unlike other cities, Atlanta was not affected by the national slump experienced by other cities during the first quarter of 1974. Despite the recessive forecast, many Atlanta businessmen were optimistic about the current economic health and potential growth of the downtown area. Businessmen boasted that Atlanta booming development was too strong for the gloomy forecast projected by Washington. One spokesman for one of Atlanta's biggest downtown developers stated, "We've got so much money already committed for construction that is already underway that it would be almost impossible to derail Atlanta."²⁰¹

Atlanta's growth was unstoppable and the key to Atlanta's future was not purely economic, but political. A spirit of cooperation between the business and political establishments—the white business elite and black City hall was attributed as the key to Atlanta's renewal and development. In 1974, despite a slow first quarter along with decreased building permits and prime rate increases, the recession had little adverse impact on the city's downtown development. There was a vast amount of already financed construction activity underway. In Atlanta in the 1960s, a development boom of epic proportion changed the city's skyline. However, an ongoing movement to finance a rapid transit system at the cost of \$2 billion

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Sam Hopkins, "Atlanta's Economy Boom Too Strong to Slow Down," 19 April 1974, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

was beginning to be the biggest priority of the city. In addition to the rapid transit system, there was another estimated \$2 billion in downtown constructions with hundreds of millions of dollars in other projects on the drawing boards and in the minds of other developers.²⁰²

Examples of Atlanta's potential were Cousin's Properties and John Portman. Cousin's Properties was involved with the Omni, the Omni International and the World Congress Center—reportedly had some 35 more acres of choice downtown land. In addition to numerous office buildings under construction, downtown Atlanta had completed nearly 5,000 new hotel rooms in 18 months. Atlanta's downtown development was considered flamboyant, but developers had no evidence of a decrease in convention business, tourists and other visitors to Atlanta. In fact, there was every indication that every new development would be highly utilized. John Portman's 70 story cylindrical hotel on Peachtree Street had advanced bookings and assurance of full utilization in 1974. It was completed in 1975.²⁰³

In the mid-1970s, urban renewal and new developments pushed Atlanta into being the country's third leading convention site. In addition to the completion of the rapid transit system, the downtown area made it easy for tourists, as well as shoppers, to access both the suburban and downtown areas, which in turn boosted proceeds from lodging and retail sales. However, with urban renewal and new development, the question of crime rose as a factor as to whether developers would continue building in the downtown core area. Further developments indicated that crime was not a deterrent to builders. An example of this can be seen in the Atlanta

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

Underground, a historic quarter and entertainment complex covering two square blocks beneath downtown streets.²⁰⁴

Business fell 18 percent at Underground Atlanta as a result of the recession experienced nationally. However, in Atlanta, much of it had to do with crime. People were simply afraid to go downtown and the media portrayed most of these criminals as blacks. As a result, racial fears were aroused. For other cities, crime and race scares were old problems, but for modern Atlanta, the largest city in the South, this was fairly a new trend. Underground Atlanta was near the Edgewood neighborhood, heavily black area in the city in which the media reported the perpetrators of the crime. However, there was no evidence to substantiate this claim. Because of its symbolism to the city, Underground Atlanta was declared as a historic park and a fence was erected where \$.25 was charged for admission and the money was used for security and maintenance. More importantly, the popular sentiment towards Underground Atlanta's criminal activity was deemed as a result of friction between the majority black population and the white business elite. Clearly there were tensions between the two establishments as seen in a letter between the chairman of Atlanta based Rich's Department store and Jackson, charging Jackson with racism. In turn, Jackson addressed these false claims in his speeches referring to "bigots and fear mongers." Tensions between the two establishments were high and were seen in a series of articles on the front pages of the Atlanta Constitution for seven days in March. The paper laid much of the blame on Jackson stating, "Throughout the Sixties, Atlanta was Camelot. Spared serious racial turmoil and blessed with experienced leadership, the city became a great center of commerce and a Mecca for emerging blacks. Today, political power has shifted. New leadership

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

wrestles new problems. There are tensions among the people. Camelot has faded.”²⁰⁵ Jackson soon learned that Blacks in power would be easily subjected to charges of racial bias against whites who were becoming increasingly a minority in the “city too busy to hate.”

In response, Jackson’s actions and words were the focus of distrust by whites. This situation suggested that Atlanta’s white community, who had not been fair or just to its black communities in previous years, was in the minority and concerned that Jackson’s administration, would be as unfair to them as previous white elected administrations had been to blacks. As such, Jackson stated,

“We have a situation where the white population, by a couple of percentage points, is in the minority. There is no heritage in the white community for dealing with that fact. There is no background for dealing with that fact; and therefore the capacity to make that transition quickly, smoothly, without anxiety is lacking, which means therefore that we must be patient with ourselves. The next thing is, the black community has no heritage of dealing with the white community, that is now numerically a minority, because that was never the case before, so the black community has no background for how to react, how to treat this phenomenon, so the black community best be patient. We end up with a City where there are anxieties. These anxieties should have been expected. They are entirely predictable. They are not abnormal and they can be coped with.”²⁰⁶

Also in July of 1975, a group of downtown businessmen accused Jackson of poor planning and ignoring downtown needs in the proposed spending of nearly \$19 million in federal community development aid. In a forceful letter to Councilman Carl Ware, the Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) stated, “not a single penny of community development funds had been allocated

²⁰⁵ Al Burt, “Underground Atlanta Plans to Lock Itself in For Security Reasons,” 13 July 1975, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL. In 1837, Stephen Long marked Zero Mile Post, the point where the railroad ended. It changed its name to Atlanta in 1847. In 1864, when Sherman burned the city, flames consumed the area around the Zero Mile Post. The city rebuilt and grew around the same spot, and the railroads with it. Because of the tracks and their traffic restraints, the city built viaducts. Traffic and businesses went one story up. Atlanta covered up its past and the old city below became a haven for vagrants. However, in 1969, the old city was rediscovered and re-launched in its present form as Underground Atlanta. It boomed until about 1973 when a crime spree raised fears about crime in the downtown area.

²⁰⁶ “Has Atlanta Lost Its Racial Cool? *Atlanta Constitution*, 13 July 1975, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

to the central business district.”²⁰⁷ CAP argued that Jackson failed to plan to multiply the federal aid into larger sums through programs that attracted private investment—a process that the CAP called leveraging. Ware, a black councilman and chair of the Council’s Development Committee, accused Jackson of similar faults. Yet, Jule Sugarman asserted that CAP had not backed its promises to leverage the federal aid with private fiscal commitments to neighborhood re-development. The CAP letter, addressed to Ware, asserted that the spending plan endorsed by Jackson violated and ignored the City’s adopted 1975 comprehensive development plan. According to the white business elite, the plans “appeared to be a grab bag of seemingly unrelated projects—the very heart of the criticism of former federal categorical grant programs.” New federal community development programs gave open grants to city halls, replacing formerly separate efforts such as Model Cities and water sewer grants. Jackson’s original plan provided nearly \$10 million for housing and economic development; \$813,000 for social services; \$380,000 for urban environment improvements; and, \$4.7 million for “urban growth management.”²⁰⁸

Within Jackson’s administration, Councilman Carl Ware demanded that Jackson provide the council with six separate, specific plans that justified the various programs and attracted leveraging. According to Ware, there was no place in the proposal that explicitly detailed the use of funds. Ware also warned against a “scatter-gun approach to problem solving and objected that there was no approved citizen participation plan.” Ware questioned the withholding of \$6.7 million, 43 percent of the total programmatic funds in an unallocated reserve, considered by some, a slush fund. What was clear was that the specific proposal in question ranged from

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid; Central Atlanta Progress, [founded in 1941](#), is a private, not-for-profit corporation that strives to create a robust economic climate for Downtown Atlanta. With a [Board of Directors](#) of Downtown's top business leaders, CAP is funded through the investment of businesses and institutions.

clearing the Plunkettown slum; to building a \$50,000 swimming pool for Perry Homes public housing complex; to restoring the house next to Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthplace; to offering business loans to black communities such as Little Five Points and Lakewood Heights.²⁰⁹

Jackson deemed the charges that no funds were earmarked for downtown development as inaccurate, and pointed to two programs to help the inner city that would renovate historic Auburn Avenue and Hunter Street, black business thoroughfares. Also, in 1975, Atlanta received a development grant with 44 percent of the funds slated for inner city improvement at the sum of \$52.4 million. These funds went into categories such as housing rehabilitation, parks, new streets, improvement of the urban environment, neighborhood social services and citywide future planning. The federal guidelines for the use of these funds were outlined in seven areas: elimination of slums, improvement of bad health conditions, conservations of housing stock, expansion of community services, rational use of lands and other resources, reduction of isolation of income groups and the preservation and restoration of historic sites.²¹⁰

Auburn Avenue, often known as “Sweet Auburn” was home to some of the nations largest black-owned business firms: Mutual Federal Savings and Loans, the ninth largest business according to *Black Enterprise* magazine; Atlanta Life Insurance Company, the second largest; Citizens Trust Bank, the sixth largest, the *Atlanta Daily World* and the Martin Luther King Memorial Center. However, “Sweet Auburn” also hosted a hodge-podge of dilapidated low and mid-rise buildings, vacant stores, shops, movie theatres and nightclubs with varying degrees of

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ “Inner City Gets Most of \$52.4 Million,” 7 January 1975, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

disrepair.²¹¹ Regardless of this, Auburn Avenue was still a center for black enterprise but had lost its luster as the bustling scene in the late 19th and on into the early 20th centuries when segregation laws forced blacks to restricted areas. One hundred and forty-eight firms of all sizes called “Sweet Auburn” home. However, a group of black business leaders worked steadily to turn around the fortunes of the black business district and applied for federal funds to revitalize Auburn Avenue.

The main organization heading the revitalization project was the Inner City Development Corps (ICDC). ICDC not only sought to revitalize “Sweet Auburn,” it also set out to do the same for Hunter Street, another thoroughfare for business adjacent to the Atlanta University Complex located in the West End of the City. What contributed to this was that the population area in the Hunter Street neighborhood exceeded that of any other in metro-Atlanta, and as such, would serve as a major hub for MARTA. The MARTA station was expected to contribute to a projected demand for approximately 200,000 square feet of office space by 1995, about 100,000 square feet of replacement retail space, and another 100,000 square feet of new retail space. Hunter Street was also home to major black businesses such as Paschal’s Motor Hotel, a favorite for the black community and scene of much black political history.²¹²

The Atlanta planning, urban design, and architectural firm of Sengupta, Gruber and Associates, a beneficiary of Jackson’s affirmative action implementation, completed and presented its vision of a revitalized “Sweet Auburn” neighborhood. It was a 50-acre study area in central Atlanta that constituted one of the most promising areas for the development of

²¹¹ Jim Merriner, “Downtown Ignored, CAP Says,” 17 July 1975, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

²¹² Tom Walker, “Sweet Auburn: Plans Advance for Downtown Redevelopment,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 11 August 1974, box 3, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

neighborhood complexes of regional, national and international importance. Jackson supported the revitalization of “Sweet Auburn” because he knew its importance to black Atlanta. However, from a construction standpoint, “Sweet Auburn” did not require the demolition of large numbers of existing structures, many of which were shrines to Atlanta’s black community. Planning for the Hunter Street community revitalization was considerably simpler because fewer property owners held larger tracts of proposed redevelopment sites.²¹³

The ICDC was an umbrella organization that included two neighborhood groups: the Auburn Avenue Development Association and the Hunter Street Development Association. The list of officers and directors in these groups read like a who’s who of black leadership in Atlanta: including banker Charles Reynolds Jr., savings and loan executive Fletcher Coombs, Director of the Butler Street YMCA Warren Cochran, Alderman Q.V. Williamson, educator Dr. Vivian Henderson and businessmen T.M. Alexander and W.L. Calloway to mention just a few. Coretta Scott King was the director of the ICDC. More importantly, the plans to revitalize Auburn Avenue and Hunter Street had the endorsement of other organizations and demonstrated the strength of the central business district, such as the Central Atlanta Progress (CAP).²¹⁴

Three of Atlanta’s black-owned businesses made the list of the top 100 black firms compiled by *Black Enterprise* magazine and would have had higher representation if there was not a change in the requirements to make the list. H.J. Russell & Company, a general contracting firm with 300 employees headed by Herman Russell was the highest ranked firm on the list with \$8.15 million in revenue in 1973. R.A. Banks & Company was a general contracting company also with 18 employees headed by R.A. Banks and was the second ranked business from Atlanta with \$3 million in revenue in 1973. The last but oldest Atlanta firm on the list was Henderson

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

Travel Service headed by Jacob R. Henderson which reported \$1.65 million in 1973. What is duly noted is that none of the black companies came anywhere close to the sales and revenue figures of the most famous list of companies, the Fortune 500, although the largest firm, Motown Industries of Los Angeles came close to the smaller firms on the Fortune Second 500 List.²¹⁵

The politics of affirmative action in Atlanta were one of the most effective ways to measure anxieties between blacks and whites as well as what set Jackson apart as mayor. At the heart of the anxieties possessed by the white business elite in terms of urban renewal and development in downtown Atlanta were city contracts. Jackson was a heavy proponent of affirmative action and joint ventures between minority and white contractors. As such, this was one of the highest areas of conflict for Jackson as mayor. White contractors detested the idea that they had to fight for contracts just as minority contractors had done before. Much of their resentment was centered on what they believed were government jobs won by contractors for reasons other than price and performance. White firms claimed that joint ventures forced them to hire additional black firms at the expense of laying off their own [white] people. This was not the case, and Jackson's joint-venture mandate was brilliant, allowing middle-sized companies to go after large jobs without getting stuck in permanent combinations. As such, black contractors and professional firms were getting jobs from City Hall. Before Jackson's implementation of affirmative action, there were relatively few black firms and as such, prior opportunities were few. Though Atlanta City Hall's affirmative action plan provided work during the recession, companies with jobs were wary on whether they would get work in the future.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Tom Walker, "Black Entrepreneur: Stereotype Not Valid," *Atlanta Journal*, 31 May 1974, box 3, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

²¹⁶ "Joint Venture: Atlanta Next Point of Contention, 3 August 1975, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

From a black perspective, the struggle for equality in government contracts was ongoing. However, the toughest part of the obstacle was stifled by Atlanta's City Hall as Jackson involved black managers and owners in government contracts. To Jackson, black political empowerment meant a channel for economic influence. In a political vein, there was a level of expectation among blacks in which Jackson provided and responded to. For Jackson, the implementation of affirmative action was the right and moral thing to do for black firms and leveled access and opportunity. Jackson's administration felt that cost and non-discrimination considerations were of equal weight. Yet, on another level, affirmative action was one way for Jackson to build Atlanta's economic base in regards to the City's black majority.²¹⁷

Public Housing

During Maynard Jackson's first two terms as mayor, public housing continued to be a blighted area in the city. Public housing problems had long existed in Atlanta, however, Jackson highlighted the shortcomings after a voluntary weekend stay at Northwest Atlanta's Bankhead Courts, the scene of several violent outbreaks. To Jackson, Bankhead Courts was filthy, rat infested, and full of crime and vandalism, which, he asserted, represented of public housing throughout the city. Jackson's goal was to make public housing no different than any other housing in Atlanta, in which he concluded, was "a long, long way off." An investigation by the *Atlanta Journal* revealed that in many of Atlanta's low rent public housing complexes, residents faced conditions similar to or worse than those at Bankhead Court. The most resounding complaint from tenants was the long delays in getting needed maintenance for their apartments

²¹⁷ Ibid.

or grounds.²¹⁸ However, unlike any other politician in the city's history, Jackson experienced the inadequacies in public housing during his voluntary stay instead of relying on a report to convey his sympathy.

In 1974, Atlanta's Housing Authority had a \$13 million budget that included \$7 million in federal subsidies, nearly \$6 million from operating receipts, and had staff people stationed at every complex to help residents adjust to living in low-rent public housing. The Family Services staffs were undermanned and cutbacks in service areas had already been approved. Community pride and togetherness were more evident in some of the older public housing projects around Atlanta such as Techwood, Carver, Capitol and Grady Homes where most of the residents had lived for long periods of time and had established roots in the community. There was also a greater mixture of different age groups in these older complexes, whereas most of the newer complexes were filled with relatively young families, who viewed public housing as a temporary stop on the way to something better.²¹⁹

Contributions to public housing problems in Atlanta were just as much environmental as social ills and could have been avoided. Erosion had removed huge plots of land exposing gas pipes. Bankhead Courts was built on a site where there were known drainage problems. As for the social ills, project planners failed to include a playground or large play area for children. Jackson's visit to Bankhead Courts focused on the public housing situation in the city that led to a number of suggestions for citywide improvements from private organizations, city officials, and housing experts. A number of improvements in recreation, sanitation and security were made. Jackson suggested the planting of community gardens in the complexes to help bring

²¹⁸ John Head and Chet Fuller, "Public Housing, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 10 November 1974, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

residents closer together and also “help out with food in these hard times.” Also, he suggested that experts in landscaping and animal and plant husbandry” should be added to maintenance staffs and should also teach the tenants the proper ways to care for their environment. Lastly, Jackson suggested that fencing and lighting for public housing complexes for security reasons, as well as auxiliary police patrols in housing complexes. With this, Jackson aggressively sought federal funds to teach people how to live together.²²⁰

The Atlanta Housing Authority, at the behest of Jackson, compiled a statistical analysis from information on more than 32,000 low rent public housing tenants, which concluded what Jackson knew, that there was widespread despair and instability amongst Atlanta’s poor. The data stated that of some 10,377 heads of household, 82 percent were women; only 9 percent of the households had both a mother and father present; about 60 percent of the heads of households were between the ages of 20 and 49; slightly more than 60 percent of the persons surveyed were 16 years old or younger; more than 65 percent of the low-income tenants received some form of government welfare payments; and more than 26 percent received Social Security or other governmental benefits. Fifty-eight percent of family heads had annual incomes of less than \$2,500, which was below the poverty line. As such, forty-two percent of the residents paid less than \$20 per month in rent. Another 35 percent paid less than \$70 per month. From 1972 to 1974, fifty-three percent of Atlanta’s public housing residents had moved into housing projects from hardships due to the economic recession. For seventy-one percent of those living in apartments, it was there first experience in public housing. However, in 1974, 2,542 persons reportedly left public housing. Only 1 percent of the departures were a result of eviction for non-payment of rent. About 12 percent of those leaving moved into private rental residences and 5

²²⁰ Ibid.

percent bought homes. Eighty-three percent of public housing tenants were black, and public housing in Atlanta was getting blacker.²²¹ Being that the Atlanta Housing Authority could charge no more than 25 percent of a families' adjusted income for rent, the high poverty level in Atlanta drained city funds and prompted the Jackson administration to constantly seek federal funds.

It was clear that public housing was blight on the city and agreed upon by Atlanta city officials, public housing administrators, federal authorities, and public housing residents. Lawmakers lamented that the problem with public housing could not be solved by public funds, that the real source of the problem was working with the people and providing educational and employee training programs. There were 52,000- 80,000 low-income Atlantans who lived in public housing. Housing authority spokesmen admitted that they did not know the number of people that lived in public housing projects because of the large number of unlisted relatives and friends living with residents.²²²

Public Transportation, Annexation, and Consolidation

In 1971, a campaign to obtain voter approval for plans to establish a billion dollar Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority was waged. As early as the 1960s, Atlanta's business elite pushed for a rapid transit system. The measure was first put on the ballot in 1968. Two-thirds of the billion dollar project was to be funded by the federal government and one-third by local investors. However, black leadership had no significant role in structuring the

²²¹ John Head and Chet Fuller, "91% of Families Have Just One Parent Present," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Sunday, 10 November 1974, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Poverty and Health Statistics Branch/HHES Division; Also, it was noted that of the 10,377 heads of households responding, two had cash over \$100 available; five had checking accounts of \$200 or more; 29 had savings accounts of any amount at all; 183 owned bonds; four owned stock, and two owned real estate.

²²² Ibid.

proposition which was put to the voters and as a result was defeated, with blacks voting against it overwhelmingly. According to Mack Jones, in preparing for a second referendum, blacks were added to both the MARTA Board of directors and its staff, and MARTA hired a young black executive as community relations director with the primary responsibility for selling the proposition, which was ultimately approved by referendum. This event shows the ebb and flow of negotiations which occurred between white leadership and a task force that represented the black coalition led by black state senator Leroy Johnson and then Vice-Mayor Maynard Jackson.

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Jones asserts that the coalition agreed to support the change from financing by the property tax to a sales tax, though the latter imposed a greater burden on the black working poor. MARTA agreed, in turn, to reduce the transit fare from \$.40 to \$.15 for the first seven years of its operation to run a rail line to an outlying black area not included in its initial plans. Once the agreement between MARTA and the black coalition was reached, black leaders supported the referendum almost unanimously. The issue was structured in such a way that anyone who did not support the referendum was characterized as opposing economic growth and civic progress. Black politicians aspiring to higher office could not afford such a label.²²⁴

While the airport was being renovated, MARTA was set to begin construction. Progress towards public transportation was deeply intertwined with annexation, with had been a point of contention due to Atlanta changing demographics. In 1968, the original plans to begin a rapid transit authority were voted on during the November election, seeking rejection or approval of a \$377.6 million bond issue. To convince voters of their intentions, MARTA went so far as to draw up a timetable and work schedule of there plans where the 40 mile system would reach

²²³ Jones, 103.

²²⁴ Ibid.

from Hartsfield Airport to Interstate 285 on the northeast, east and west and would include 32 stations.²²⁵

In the 1970s, the MARTA issue demonstrated Maynard Jackson's responsibility to his black constituents. Jackson fought to put MARTA stations in majority black neighborhoods on the west, south and east sides of the city to assure access to transportation for commuting working blacks. In 1978, construction of the MARTA to link downtown with the suburbs was progressively moving forward. However, the clear issue over MARTA centered on a movement of annexation, consolidation and race. Annexation, consolidation, and race became an issue as a result of resentment by rural and suburban whites in the state legislature. One unnamed suburban legislator stated, "Maybe 'these people' in Atlanta got too much responsibility. Maybe some of it ought to be taken away from 'em." On the other hand, an unnamed black Atlanta city councilman stated, "Some of the legislators dislike Maynard and Reggie Eaves more than any two black men I've ever known. They dislike them because they don't understand them. The push is on now because the administration is black and they (whites) don't have the input they once had."²²⁶ Clearly, the statements of the unnamed suburban legislator were racist remarks as seen in how, he felt, "these people" could not handle the responsibility.

The issue of race was at the center of annexation because some whites looked eagerly toward expansion of the City as a way of boosting the white voting percentage and, perhaps, recovering some white control of City government. Much of the defamation of Jackson came from his determination to get blacks a share of city contracts through minority joint ventures. Many rural legislators took an interest in the annexation and consolidation fight and some of

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ "Race Called Real Annexation Issue, 20 October 1975, *Atlanta Journal*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

them suggested the creation of a “District of Atlanta” that would be ran by the Georgia General Assembly and controlled firmly in order to oust Jackson and people of his kind. This sentiment or more moderate versions of it, meant that downtown senators and representatives who favored expansions would find themselves in bed with their rural colleagues, albeit for entirely different and contradictory reasons.²²⁷

Some of Atlanta blacks favored enlarging the city for the simple reason that an expanded tax base brought in more tax revenues to help meet increasing costs of providing services. Yet, these same blacks also recognized that expansion could wash away many of the black political gains from the long civil rights struggles with a flood of new white registered voters. To blacks, it was unclear as to how voter registration, annexation and consolidation would change Atlanta’s ever changing population. In 1975, Atlanta’s population including 44,000 citizens in the Atlanta-DeKalb overlap was estimated at 477,100. This figure, from the Atlanta Regional Commission, set the racial split at 286,400 blacks (60 percent) and 190,700 white (40 percent). However, the voter registration figures were a slightly different. According to the Fulton and DeKalb county records, blacks made up 51.8 percent of the city’s registered voters with 100,445. Whites comprised 48.2 percent with 93,387. Annexation plans discussed would dilute black voting strength to some degree. The consolidation of all of the governments in Fulton County into one successor government would impede black progress the most, where blacks only accounted for 37.9 percent of voters in the entire county.²²⁸

The dilution of black voting strength would arouse the U.S. Justice Department and could lead to a review by the U.S. attorney general under the authority of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ “Suburbs Want Atlanta to Keep Away,” 20 March 1975, *Atlanta Journal*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

Dilution would not automatically lead to a dismissal of annexation plans, however, some lawyers believed that court decisions like the Richmond, Virginia annexation case, would allow expansion of the city even if blacks lost voting strengths. There were some black legislators who pushed for total county consolidation. Their idea was grounded on the fact that whites were leaving the city and the county for other areas, and as such, statistics indicated that Fulton County would continue to be majority black in 1980. According to state Rep. Ben Brown of Atlanta, total county consolidation and properly drawn voting lines, along with efforts to register black voters would give blacks 60 percent control in the new council, which was larger than the 37 percent majority held in 1975.²²⁹

Because blacks were in control of Atlanta, many did not trust legislation and felt that there was a movement to undermine their power. As such, they were careful not to give up any power, despite revenue woes. For black Atlantans, the popular sentiment was that political power was all they had. Atlanta City Councilman Marvin Arrington viewed the consolidation and annexation “as a tool for getting at Maynard [Jackson] and Reggie Eaves.” According to Arrington, “The truth is that Maynard Jacksons, Reggie Eaveses and Marvin Arringtons are always going to be in office now. We’ve passed that point. We’re not going back to the way it used to be.”²³⁰ Somewhat grandiose, Arrington’s comments detailed tensions between white business leaders and the black City hall.

With massive annexation and consolidation, and attempt to consolidate the governments of Atlanta and Fulton County without also merging their schools systems would be dismissed by

²²⁹ Ibid; In the Richmond case, black registration went from 52 percent to 42 percent, but the U.S. Supreme Court said that was all right as long as ward lines were drawn to assure blacks proportional representation, and as long as some “objectively verifiable, legitimate purpose” for the expansion was demonstrated.

²³⁰ Ibid.

federal officials. Atlanta's public schools system was 87 percent black; whereas Fulton County's was 86 percent white. Groups such as Research Atlanta, suggested that massive busing could be averted if the two school systems were consolidated in conjunction with a city-county merger. However, it speculated that the federal courts faced with an attempt to merge the governments while keeping the school systems separate would be perceived as an attempt to resegregate and would order a cross-district integration plan.”²³¹

In a speech given to the Hungry Club forum at the Butler Street YMCA, Maynard Jackson proposed a three-to-five-year moratorium to further study a valid annexation plan for the City of Atlanta. This time away extended beyond the 1977 election, in which Jackson ran for reelection. Jackson asserted that all of the annexation plans put forth lacked merit. As such, he proposed that a citizen's study commission and a state committee explore the annexation and consolidation and present a plan for voters' approval by 1980. At the center of Jackson's agenda was the assurance that black voters would retain a strong role in local politics and that annexation schemes drawn up without proper data collection and interpretation could deprive whites as well as blacks of their right to citizen participation. Jackson's announcement of his stand towards annexation and consolidation broke several weeks of silence while the political climate sweltered.²³² This can be deemed as a clever move by Jackson. He solidified a black majority, along with significant white support that assured his re-election. Jackson would not chance black political empowerment that would have been weakened by annexation and consolidation. However, he was not the only figure working to assure his re-election and galvanize his base.

Among the mostly white pro-annexation camps, reactions to Jackson's proposal for a three to five year moratorium were extremely negative. Former Georgia Governor Carl Sanders, who proposed a

²³¹ “1965 Voting Rights Act Is Biggest Legal Hurdle,” 20 October 1975, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

²³² “Mayor Asks 3-Year Wait on Annexing,” 2 October 1975, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL; For many years the Butler Street YMCA served as the hub of community activities in Atlanta, particularly those related to the black community. In 1945, it started Atlanta's first city-wide forum, the Hungry Club Forum, as a meeting place for blacks and whites in Atlanta.

metro-wide umbrella form of government stated, “To wait three to five years for anything is unrealistic and most unfortunate. I don’t think this is what we need.” Sam Williams, head of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce task force examining the annexation question stated “I don’t think we’ll know any more in three to five years than we can assemble in s short time—because it has been researched to death.”²³³ By examining the responses of political figures and Atlanta’s white business elite, it is clear that both the political and economic platforms of the white establishment ran counter to that of black leadership and political interest.

In the event that the General Assembly enacted a plan disapproved by Jackson, the Mayor asserted “I would be inclined to take whatever action would be appropriate under circumstances.” Jackson demanded that any criteria for annexation or consolidation be:

1. Backed up by thorough studies of the effects on costs of all facets of government.
2. Promote tax equity and uniform tax assessments.
3. Guarantee more citizen participation.
4. Attract economic growth and development.
5. Improve governmental services.
6. Submitted to the approval of voters in the entire area to be affected, without a stipulation that a majority of the registered voters must go to the poles.
7. Preserve existing corporate charters, meet federal voting rights standards and retain the Atlanta-in-DeKalb portion of the city within Atlanta.

Jackson also stated that a Commission of Fiscal and Annexation matters (CORFAM) would be established, including 25 members to be named by the Atlanta University Center, Georgia State University and local elected officials. In addition, a state committee was set up to analyze the fiscal relationships in the 15 county Atlanta metropolitan area and present a report to the 1977 General Assembly.²³⁴

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

As the political climate over the issue of annexation and consolidation sweltered, a group of Atlanta's black leaders met discretely to start the process of strategizing to keep Atlanta "viable and solvent" while protecting black voting power. According to Reverend Joseph Lowery, the group was called Mayor Maynard Jackson's Private Black Advisory Committee on Annexation and their meetings were labeled as community forums to examine a number of plans for expanding Atlanta's boundaries. Although invitations to these meeting were mailed by Jackson's staff, the mayor's name appeared nowhere on the invitation and those present denied that the meetings were at the mayor's behest.

The initial community forums were discussions among leaders and were not made public until an Atlanta Constitution article was published on October 1, 1975. When the press asked if they could attend subsequent meetings, those present asserted that they believed that "freer and more open discussion would take place" if the press were not present. Atlanta City Councilman John H. Calhoun asserted that he did not want to be quoted on the annexation issue. Regardless of these private meetings, members of the Jackson's private black advisory committee on annexation assured the public that there was nothing to hide.²³⁵

The committee also considered the plans of both former Governor Carl Sanders and state Rep. Ben Brown. However, the committee's sentiment towards annexation and consolidation was what authentically good for the black community was authentically good for the total community.²³⁶ These private committee members showed black Atlanta investment in Jackson's plan. When Jackson bullied his way into Atlanta politics in 1968, he annoyed black Atlanta's king makers. However, he later won overwhelming support during some of the city's most challenging moments such as the 1977 sanitation strike.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ "Blacks Ponder Strategy, 2 October 1975, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

The 1977 Sanitation Strike

On March 28, 1977, just days before ninth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Atlanta was in the midst of yet another bitter sanitation strike. On April 4th, Rev. John Bell reminded the City's African American sanitation strikers that King had been assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on a mission to aide men like themselves, also members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (ASFCME). Bell asserted that King's spirit would inspire Atlanta sanitation workers to victory in their own struggle. However, the strikers knew that there were a thousand men in the wings, waiting to apply for their jobs.

Simultaneously on April 4th, Mayor Maynard Jackson met with the press to summon King's name for a different purpose. On the strike's second day, Jackson announced that strikers would be permanently replaced if they did not return to work within 48 hours. As promised, he terminated their employment on April 1st. On this morning, Jackson, a former lawyer with the National Labor Relations Board, told the press that replacement workers were being hired. Jackson had broad support from Atlanta's white business and civic leaders such as the Atlanta Business League and the Chamber of Commerce as well as the black middle class such as the Urban League and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. However, climax of the press conference came when black Atlanta's most eminent minister, Reverend Martin Luther King Sr. defended Jackson on the anniversary of his son's death. According to King Sr., Jackson attempted to mollify the unreasonable strikers and the time had come to draw the line. King Sr.

stated, “If you do everything you can [for the union] and don’t get satisfaction, then fire the hell out of them,’ and Jackson did just that and was now moving on.”²³⁷

The strike commenced on March 28 when 1,300 workers demanded a fifty-cent an hour wage increase to raise incomes that averaged \$7,000 annually which placed a family of four with one wage earner below the poverty line. With Jackson’s actions, questions arose on what happened between 1970, when he was vice-mayor and marched with the sanitation workers, and 1977 as mayor and advocate for taxpayers. It was evident that the reactions to Jackson were different than those of Sam Massell in 1970. However, as some argue that the 1970s was a watershed moment for striker replacement tactics where political and economic forces shifted against unions.²³⁸ With the majority of Atlanta’s City workers being black, this strike portrayed how public workers won the right to strike in practice when the law did not allow it. Also, this strike fit into the larger milieu of the ways in which public workers lost recently won protections against replacement as a result of the fiscal crises of the 1970s because of the political turmoil in which it resulted.

Jackson’s accomplishments made his likeliness as a strikebreaker doubtful. He had a strong record for defending and pursuing black interests, especially in the area of affirmative action and city contracts as seen in building Hartsfield Airport. Ironically, Jackson received high endorsements from the AFSCME in his 1973 election. He had also called attention to the labor plight of public workers in the climate of fiscal severity by predicting that the nation’s economic woes would get worse and that American cities would become extremely moderate in terms of budgeting. However, two factors pushed Jackson toward his confrontation with the AFCSME in 1977. First, in 1977, he was seeking re-election with a secured base within the black community

²³⁷ McCartin, 68; Also see *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 April 1977.

²³⁸ Ibid.

but made a concerted effort to win over middle-class whites and the business establishment. Second, Atlanta faced a financial crisis, and as a result, the law required the city to balance its annual budget. Jackson, being the first black mayor with charges of reverse racism, did not want to be labeled as financially irresponsible. Jackson once stated “Before I take the city into a deficit financial position, elephants will roost in the trees.”²³⁹

Jackson’s political commitment to all Atlantans assured a showdown between City Hall and the AFSCME. The AFSCME had demanded a pay raise for more than a year. A sanitation strike had almost erupted in the July of 1976; however, it was postponed when Jackson rerouted federal funds into a temporary \$200 raise. With inflation up 7 percent, workers knew that little to no money would come from the city and Jackson claimed that there was nothing that he could do. Jackson admitted that city employees needed and deserved a pay increase but claimed that the city did not have it.²⁴⁰ A wildcat walkout in January of 1977 detailed how serious the workers were about a raise. As such, Jackson urged patience.

Jackson strategies to fight the AFSCME were effective, claiming that Jerry Wurf, the white president of the AFSCME, instigated the walkout from Washington. Jackson stated “Maybe the union thought that because I’m liberal, because I’m black, I would respond to any demand no matter how outlandish. If they think that, they’ve got another thing coming.” According to McCartin, Jackson saw himself as the first domino in the labor’s southern domino theory and asserted that if labor made a move on black political leadership, it was going to have severe consequences for labor throughout the South.²⁴¹ Once again, Jackson and Atlanta were

²³⁹ McCartin 84; Direct quote taken from “Atlanta: The Strikebreaker,” *Newsweek*, 25 April 1977, 29.

²⁴⁰ “Atlanta Mayor Fails to Keep Commitments,” December 1976, *Atlanta Constitution*, 4 April 1977.

²⁴¹ “Atlanta: The Strikebreaker,” *Newsweek*, 25 April 1977, 29.

seen as the litmus test, and to Jackson, the very future of black political leadership depended on him showing that his administration could not be intimidated by unions into a fiscally reckless settlement.

With Jackson's posture, Atlanta business leaders applauded and with their influence with the Newspaper, the *Atlanta Constitution* ran an ad that stated "Fire the Strikers" on March 30th and 31st. This ad asserted the sentiments of Atlanta business and civic community that Jackson needed to show some consideration to taxpayers. When the ad ran, Jackson issued an ultimatum: that if employees did not return to work by April 1st, they were terminated. In reference to the AFSCME, Jackson stated "We've leaned over backwards so many times that I think that the AFSCME is walking up our back."²⁴²

In an attempt to redeem themselves, the AFSCME ran an ad in the *New York Times* chastising Jackson with "phonyism and cronyism." Union spokespersons charged Jackson as a union buster that bullied the AFSCME as a friend of the poor man, working man, black man and so fourth." To add insult to injury, strikers made banners that read "Maynard's Word is Garbage" during a nationally televised baseball game. However, these antics did not discourage Jackson and he authorized termination letters to the strikers forty-eight hours after the deadline passed. Most of the strikers went through the same process in 1970 and felt that they would be rehired as before. However, Jackson began hiring replacement workers, and strikers were bewildered when hundreds applied for their jobs. Strikers were stunned in the way Atlanta's black leadership and middle class backed Jackson.²⁴³

²⁴² *Atlanta Constitution*, March 30—31, 1977.

²⁴³ McCartin, 85; See *New York Times*, 30 March 1977.

Tensions between black elites and middle classes; black working classes and the poor can be seen in Jackson's actions toward the strikers. Most black community leaders supported the mayor. The *Atlanta Daily World* regarded elite and middle class sentiment, calling the AFSCME demands extreme power grabs by the Union and questioned by they [AFSCME] challenged a black mayor "at this time, when we stand at the point of convincing the world that our people can lead a section in the South." Atlanta's chapters of the NAACP and the Urban League supported Jackson as well, and Rev. Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference encouraged strikers to return to work. However, the most boisterous and effective tactic that quelled the strike was King Sr., who did so by stating "If any group comes to try to destroy our town, we are against it, with all the power we have."²⁴⁴ This statement is reminiscent of the same sentiments held by William Hartsfield and Ralph McGill when Atlanta integrated its schools in 1961.

McCartin asserts that Atlanta's white business and civic communities were impressed with Jackson's handling of the strike. He notes that Jackson knew that if he appeased them, he was sure to get re-elected. However, some black unions denounced Jackson for using "black workers as political pawns in his efforts to please a middle class black political constituency and satisfy the white establishment." Pastors of smaller churches with working class congregations condemned Jackson's action also. James Farmer, formerly of the Congress of Racial Equality and Rev. James Lawson of Memphis supported the strikers. Lawson compared Jackson to Henry Loeb, the infamous mayor of Memphis and strikebreaker, which brought Dr. King to Memphis

²⁴⁴ Atlanta Daily World, 3 and 7 April 1977, *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 April 1977; and *New York Times*, 5 April 1977.

and resulted in his assassination. Jackson rebutted, “Is it liberal to make a predominantly black city financially unsound?”²⁴⁵

After hiring replacements, McCartin asserts that it was clear that Jackson had defeated the AFSCME. Jackson announced that the strike was over and by late April, half of the strikers had reapplied for their old jobs. Many were rehired at lower salaries through the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). Understanding the situation at hand, the union gave in on April 29, 1977.²⁴⁶ Most strikers regained full-time employment with their old salaries by the end of 1977. However, Jackson’s popularity was insurmountable with Atlanta’s white business and civic communities. In 1977, Jackson took 63.6 percent of the vote.

The Airport

As far as new developments and affirmative action, Jackson’s crown jewel was the midfield expansion at Hartsfield International Airport. The city built new terminals between then-existing runways at Hartsfield with 135 loading gates and nearly doubled the number at the then-present terminal. The cost was estimated at \$400 million. Jackson halted the design phase of the development while architects and engineers went through the process of bringing in black-owned firms. His intention was to make a three-way partnership, where architects, engineers and black-owned firms worked together. In July of 1975, Chief Administrative Officer Jule Sugarman confirmed that at least 25 percent of the airport contracts were earmarked for blacks. Shortly afterwards, Jackson announced that four black-owned architectural firms were put

²⁴⁵ McCartin, 86.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

together to create their own joint venture. This assured that the firms could handle 25 percent of the work.²⁴⁷

Much more money was spent in the construction phase of the airport expansion. Jackson's administration drew up standards for minority involvements in construction in order to present them to potential bidders before work specification were sent out. Some airline officials, like white businessmen, worried about the pending costs and minority involvement and looked to the extent in which Newark's airport, which endured a similar situation where airline officials attributed 25 percent of his costs—several millions dollars—to efforts that involved black firms.

Maynard Jackson's vision for the airport had a two fold goal, first, to help minority contractors to get contracts; and second to build the world's largest terminal complex. This terminal complex made Atlanta ready for an estimated 40 million air passengers annually by 1980 and assured its continuing leadership as the Southeast's transportation hub. In the late 1960s, Atlanta had the nation's fourth busiest airport.²⁴⁸ Under Jackson, the goals for the 1974 expansion included air routes and facilities. With this, Jackson authorized that a series of international good will and business development exchanges between Atlanta, "the crossroads city of the Southern U.S." and Hong Kong, "the crossroads city of the Far East." As such, 85 Atlantans visited Hong Kong, which included Wyche Fowler, Jr., President of the Atlanta City Council; Mrs. Maynard Jackson, representing her husband; representatives of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce; businessmen and news media. To Atlanta City Hall and business

²⁴⁷ "Dealing Black In: White Business Firms Are At Best Uneasy With City's Joint Venture Contract Rule," 3 August 1975, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta, EU, MARBL.

²⁴⁸ "Press Release," Bell & Stanton Inc., no date, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL; When this press release was released, only Chicago's O'Hare, New York's Kennedy, and Los Angeles were ahead of Atlanta. Chicago's O'Hare had 69 gates and New York's Kennedy had 126 gates.

community, the successful joint venture foreshadowed many other business areas where cities with common characteristics and interests came together. Both cities were interested in the expansion of international air routes as well as in a new rapid transit program to serve their growing populations.²⁴⁹

Renovations to Hartsfield International Airport were put on hold when a dispute erupted. At the center of the dispute, was the Davis-Bacon Act, which set minimum wage standards for projects partially funded by federal dollars. Under the act, the U.S. Labor Department set the minimum wage scales for certain categories of building projects, categorizing them into building rates, heavy construction rates and highway construction rates. Projects categorized as “building” carried the highest wage scales, followed by the “heavy” rates and then the “highway” rates. As such, the Labor Department initially determined that one of disputed projects would be ruled by the heavy rates, and the other two by the highway rates. The Trades Council, contesting the designations, filed further facts and won a new Labor Department decision placing all three projects in the higher paying category of building construction. The Labor Department later notified the city of the new designation in a mail-a-gram, which arrived there nine days before the deadline for contractors to submit bids, violating its rule mandating a 10-day notice. Since the federal bureaucracy failed to abide by its own bureaucratic rules, the city of Atlanta and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which supplied the federal funds, said they were not bound by the revised wage scale designation. A decision in the union’s favor would hike the cost of the project anywhere from \$1.2 million, the unions figure, up to \$20

²⁴⁹ “Atlanta Business Leaders Visit Hong Kong, Urge Good Will Visits in Return,” Press Release, Bell & Stanton Inc., no date, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

million, the city's figures. Through their rent payments, the airlines would have shouldered the cost for expansion.²⁵⁰

After a week of heated discussion on whether Atlanta would be able to build its \$400 million expansion for Hartsfield International Airport, a sigh of relief came for Jackson and the other City Hall negotiators in the project. The solution came after round-the-clock talks between the city, the airlines and the North Georgia Builders Trade Council and was contingent upon an agreement to both the city and the airlines in case the union won its appeal. The settlement was reached after negotiation ended with six airlines agreed to shoulder the extra cost through their lease documents with the city. That agreement cleared the way for the awarding of \$35 million worth of contracts. Bids on those contracts were to expire by 11:59 pm on Tuesday, March 22, 1977 which would have delayed the project for at least a year, because of the length of time necessary to rebid and because the city would have missed most, if not all, of the summer construction season. The agreement that saved the first three contracts was signed by six of the eight airlines that served Atlanta. As for the agreements, Jackson stated, "the fact that they are willing to run that risk demonstrates the crucial importance of the midfield terminal and the high sense of civic responsibility and commitment to Atlanta on the part of the airlines."²⁵¹

After the agreement, Jackson immediately signed \$35 million in contracts for the first work on the airport expansion. The contracts for taxiways, aprons, fencing, a tunnel for a "people mover" to the new terminal and an access road, were awarded. J.A. Jones Construction Co. received \$18,628,846 for the "people mover; the C.W. Matthews Contracting Co. received

²⁵⁰ "\$18 Million? \$1.5 million? End of Airport Plans," 20 March 1977, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

²⁵¹ "City Hoorays: Air Terminal Work to Begin," 23 March 1977, *Atlanta Journal*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL; The six airlines that signed the agreement were Southern, Delta, Eastern, Piedmont, United, Northwest; the two that did not sign were Transworld and National, which had the fewest number of flights in the City.

\$15,657,840 for the taxiways and aprons; and McDougald-Warren Inc. received \$759,508 for fences and access roads. What is not clear is whether any of these construction companies were minority contractors.²⁵² Built on schedule and under budget, Hartsfield [-Jackson] International Airport was Maynard Jackson's greatest feat as mayor of Atlanta. It is currently the world's busiest airport with 50 passenger and cargo air carriers and serving 80 million passengers in 2007.²⁵³

As Maynard Jackson served as Mayor for two terms (1974-1982), a period of economic development, fiscal stability, job creation, neighborhood revitalization, improved delivery of City services, effective public safety and construction of the modern Atlanta airport marked his tenure. Jackson's politics of inclusion opened the doors of City government to all citizens, and for the first time, minorities and women had the opportunity to compete for jobs and contracts on an equal basis. In his first term as mayor, less than one half of one percent of all City contracts went to minorities. Eight years later, nearly thirty percent of those contracts went to minority and female owned businesses, and employment of minority and female managers gained national and local acclaim. Accurately reflecting the accomplishments of the Jackson years, Rand McNally, in its *Almanac of Places Rated*, established Atlanta as the best major City in which to live and work in the United States in December of 1981.²⁵⁴

What is of particular interest in looking at the influences that Maynard Jackson had in local, statewide and national politics requires the investigation of Jackson's tenure as Mayor of Atlanta. Atlanta's new status was not solely Jackson's prodigy. In a 1973 edition of *Newsweek Magazine*, Atlanta Chamber of Commerce submitted a by-liner entitled "Atlanta. The world's

²⁵² "Midfield Terminal Clear for Takeoff," 23 March 1977, *Atlanta Constitution*, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

²⁵³ http://www.atlanta-airport.com/Default.asp?url=sublevels/airport_info/gmpage.htm; currently, in October 2003, the airport was renamed Hartsfield-Jackson International airport for the late Maynard Jackson after his death that previous June.

²⁵⁴ "Maynard Jackson: A Personal Profile," January 1990, box 14, Pomerantz Papers, EU, MARBL.

next great City.” Some considered this by-liner as typical Atlanta boosterism, however, Atlanta was deemed the vanguard of new era cities. Outside of major national capitals, most of the handful of cities with true international influence began as ports. However, with burgeoning technology in transportation, particularly in aviation, gave key inland cities the same opportunities to flourish as international centers. Atlanta was uniquely positioned to become the first city in this new era to gain worldwide importance. It was a gateway to a regional market of 30 million people. It was an importer and exporter of goods and services, architecture and culture, ideas and technology. Among its major resources were the enlightened attitudes of its leaders and the involvement of its people. As such, Atlanta was the world’s next great City.²⁵⁵

However, the relationship between Atlanta’s rise to international status and boosterism should not be taken lightly. To some, Atlanta was a land of slick page dreams. This kind of boisterous and exploding city of Chamber of Commerce presidents, merchants, daredevil promoters, developers, bright young architects, entrepreneurs set a tone that rung with confidence and arrogance that built city-states in yesteryears. New downtown buildings were erected, each reaching for some niche of notoriety and accomplishment. Some of these such as the world’s tallest round hotel with floating cocktail lounge, the world’s fastest sinking sports arena, the tearing away of buildings at Five Points to create a spacious part in the center of town, and the demolitions of a stately old marble library to float a spectacular new design all spoke to ideas centered on the price that the City would pay. There was popular sentiment that Atlanta’s youthful vigor lacked in spiritual dimensions. Though the Atlanta business community was less than enthused to support cultural endeavors, the city had grown into a place immersed with

²⁵⁵ “Atlanta. The World’s Next Great City.” Unknown Newspaper , 1973, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

hearty sports fans and invested millions in developing one of the greatest convention cities in the nation with the Atlanta Falcons, Hawks, and its Underground District.²⁵⁶

Absolutely and positively, Maynard Jackson moved mountains to make Atlanta not only a black Mecca, but an international city. His combination of maverick qualities, paradigm breaking, and the gift of gab made him a very effective and influential politician. However, his commitment to black Atlantans, meant so much more and it can be concluded that Jackson's agenda was to promote black political empowerment. He moved to better Atlanta, by enhancing black Atlanta. This is not to say that Jackson made Atlanta a viable city for all blacks. The relationship between Atlanta's rise to world-class status and boosterism should be considered. By and large, it was clear that he pushed a black agenda, and at the same time, moved Atlanta to the world's center stage.

²⁵⁶ "Coming Atlanta," Newsweek Atlanta Telex, 27 January 1973, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, EU, MARBL.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SORROW OF A CITY: COLLISIONS IN CLASS AND COUNTER NARRATIVES TOWARDS ATLANTA'S BLACK MECCA STATUS AS SEEN THROUGH THE ATLANTA YOUTH MURDERS

*Thinkin' that in reality the world is like a ball full of players. We trapped off in this maze with walls made of layers. And only prayer, is the tightest game that you can have. The devil's takin' a swing that might explain the broken glass. But my crystal ball see the pistol fall to the wayside. Nobody would die in cops and robbers when we used to play right.....Huh, the only thang we feared was Williams, Wayne!*²⁵⁷

In Atlanta, the 1970s and 80s signaled a watershed moment where black electoral politics and black political empowerment came together to form what was purported as the black Mecca. The popularity of Maynard Holbrook Jackson Jr. and Andrew Young were insurmountable with Atlanta's white business and civic communities. In 1977, Jackson took 63.6 percent of the vote garnering wide support from white Atlantans.²⁵⁸ Young in turn, received 55.1 percent of the vote catapulting him into office in 1981, and 83 percent of the vote in 1985.²⁵⁹ On the surface, galvanizing these percentages for victory indicated that Atlanta was truly "a city too busy to hate," but, Jackson's second term as mayor was a tumultuous time in the city, as schisms within the black Atlanta widened. An example of this is illustrated with the sudden resignation of black City Councilman Arthur Langford Jr. His resignation indicated a growing frustration from black leaders excluded from the new emerging coalition with Maynard Jackson at its center. Black and

²⁵⁷ Goodie Mob, "Thought Process," *Soul Food LP*, 1995.

²⁵⁸ "Schism in Black Politics Widens," *Atlanta Constitution*, 3 August 1978, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, Emory University: Manuscript, Archives and Rare Books Library.

²⁵⁹ Vincent McGraw, "Young's Victory Molds Future: Runoff Races Seat New Officials," *Atlanta Daily World*, 30 October 1981, 1; Tom Teeppen, "City Voters Saw the Big Picture," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 10 October 1985, D/20.

white political observers disagreed about the cause of the schism; however, most agreed that the new black power structure, the Maynard Machine, was beginning to take shape. A new group including David Franklin, Jackson, Joe Hudson and Mack Wilbourne were asserting themselves in Atlanta politics. With the exception of Jackson, this group raised \$20,000 for Jackson's 1977 re-election campaign. With the formation of the new black coalition, members of the old guard closed ranks to protect what leverage they had left. However, the primary elections held in 1978, especially the races for the Fulton County Commission where the mayor placed a large measure of personal prestige on the line—was a barometer of how much the old guard's power had ebbed and the new coalition had grown. For the New Coalition, it would be a political embarrassment for the Maynard Machine should either of the two candidates—Michael Lomax or Chuck Williams suffer defeat at the polls. Yet some observers blamed Jackson for the split stating that he had lost touch with the old guard and cut them out of the patronage that was dispensed from City Hall. With the changes in the city charter in 1974, several black councilmen lost massive amounts of power. Bureau directors no longer reported directly to heads of council Committees. With more power concentrated in the hands of the mayor and city bureaucracy as a result of the charter change, it was widely believed that Jackson forgot that he had to “stroke the sometimes massive egos of Atlanta's black politicians, and that he limited patronage to his friends.”²⁶⁰ Clearly, this was a moment where Jackson's highly touted ego and the backing of the City's white business fueled the belief that he had outgrown his black constituents.

To some, Jackson's failure to consult the old guard might have saved him from being attacked during the controversies that surrounded the firing of former Commissioner of Administrative Services Emma Darnell and ousted Public Safety Reginald Eaves. The ousting of

²⁶⁰ “Schism in Black Politics Widens,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 3 August 1978, box 1, *Newsweek Inc.* Atlanta Collection, Emory University: Manuscript, Archives and Rare Books Library.

both Darnell and Eaves was compared to a bitter divorce resulting from Jackson's inability to accept criticism. Clearly, black Atlantans no longer took Jackson at face value and began to question his credibility. There were several opinions circulating over the public bickering between Jackson and other black elected officials. Those that were pro-Jackson thought that the attacks stemmed from a desire on the part of Jackson's rivals to stake out a position and constituency in order to play some role—either as candidate or power broker—in the 1981 mayoral elections. However, some observers voiced that this split was the natural maturing of black Atlanta politics in which the need to unify behind a single, symbolic leader had passed, leaving the field open for the diversity of the city's black community to be seen. This meant that some aspects of the Civil Rights movement had grown enough to criticize itself.²⁶¹ During the inauguration of Jackson in 1974, the Civic Center was packed with more than 44,000 people, mainly black people expecting to see the first black mayor change their lives. Four years later, they found their lives were not changed and were very disappointed. This spoke to a tremendous lack of understanding on what power the mayor actually had. Though Jackson was considered to be a sacred cow in Atlanta, there was the belief that his election would remedy many of the problems experienced by Atlanta's poor and black populations.

It was clear that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Atlanta had grown into an economic powerhouse in the South. By 1972, Atlanta ranked among the most prosperous cities in the United States and before the end of the decade, the city was home to seven Fortune 500 manufacturing companies, including Coca-Cola. Eight Fortune 500 service firms also called Atlanta home: Cox Communications, Genuine Parts, Citizens and Southern Georgia, First Atlanta, Trust Company of Georgia, Delta Airlines, Continental Telecom and Southern

²⁶¹ Ibid.

Company.²⁶² For Jackson, balancing power between his black constituency and the existing white business elite was most crucial. However, walking the fine tightrope between these two groups was seen as disloyalty by black Atlantans. According to Bernard Headley, throughout much of Jackson's second term, a context of racial tension was prevalent.

As stated earlier and a central theme in this story, despite the economic growth of Atlanta, the black population of the city remained in abject poverty. Crime continued to blight the city as the business community feared that commerce would leave the cities and conventions would find other venues to host meetings. In the early months of 1979, two very high profile murders took place in Atlanta's downtown. On June 28, 1979, Marc Tetalman, young white doctor from Ohio was murdered by two black robbers while in the city for a convention.²⁶³ Less than four months later, Patricia Barry, a white legal secretary was shot and killed in broad daylight on October 17th while celebrating her birthday.²⁶⁴ These murders infuriated the city and further deemed downtown as unsafe. But these murders would be upstaged by a series of events that would cripple the city for the coming years.

Indeed, this was an interesting time for the city, when Jackson's reign included wide scale criticism from whites while he strove to keep the issues of black Atlantans in mind. But Jackson's second term as mayor marked the beginning of the darkest chapters in the city's history. Horrendous crimes were committed against Atlanta's most vulnerable but vibrant population, its black youth. These crimes, known as the missing and murdered children of

²⁶² Bernard Headley, *The Atlanta Youth Murders and the Politics of Race*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1998), 9.

²⁶³ "Two Black Youths South in Physician's Murder on Downtown Atlanta Street," *Atlanta Daily World*, 1 July 1979.

²⁶⁴ Evelyn Newman, "New Jersey Man Kills Woman, Self Before Downtown Noon Crowd," *Atlanta Daily World*, 19 October 1979.

Atlanta, were some of the most horrific crimes committed against black children since the years of American slavery.

The Atlanta Youth Murders reached national and international audiences. This mass murder of black children purportedly included fourteen children between the ages seven and fourteen, all of whom were from the city's black poor and working class whose families embodied various levels of economic poverty and familial stability. Most of these children were believed to have disappeared between July of 1979 and September of 1980 while running errands for parents or neighbors or while trying to make some extra money to improve their impoverished circumstances—activities that the media disparagingly deemed as “hustling.” Days, weeks and months passed before the bodies of nine of the children were found, disposed in numerous locations, often considerable distances from the victims' homes or the places where they were last seen alive.²⁶⁵

The police had no leads in any of the cases, and with the whereabouts of the other five victims unknown, hope had given way to fear—that more bodies would turn up, along with the frightening possibility that other black children would be snatched. More kidnappings and killings did follow. Between October 1980 and May 1981, sixteen additional black males were reported missing. Their bodies turned up in various places across metropolitan Atlanta. Altogether by May of 1981, law enforcement authorities were investigating thirty alleged serial killings and searching for one missing boy.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Atlanta Child Murders Papers, Part 1.

²⁶⁶ Headley, 1; According to Headley, the white media's generally unsympathetic interpretation of the term hustling would become a hotly contested item in the discourse surrounding the tragedy. As many in Atlanta's poor black community saw it, several of the victims were at the time of their disappearance doing nothing terribly different from what many middle-class youngsters, black and white, would have been doing for income. The term “snatched” was the term often used by children and parents alike that referred to the act of being kidnapped.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold; it will analyze tensions within the black community towards Atlanta black city administration by focusing on the missing and murdered children of Atlanta, where approximately 29 blacks, mostly male children and young adults, were preyed upon. Also, this analysis will focus on the efforts of two community organizations: the Committee to Stop the Murders of Children comprised primarily of mothers of victims as well as the Techwood Bat Patrol, a group armed with baseball bats and guns that patrolled Techwood Homes to protect their community from the killer. These two groups formed because of their disappointment and distrust of the Jackson administration and can be seen as direct action against an administration perceived as neglecting to the murders because the victims were black and poor. This chapter will also examine the ways in which these murders were downplayed in order for Atlanta to make a competitive bid for the Democratic National Convention and Olympic Games, explaining and analyzing how local and state governments enacted and transformed laws to silence the Committee to Stop the Murders of Children and the Bat Patrol from their public rebuke. To be sure, both groups skirted compliance with city law. Still, once the groups submitted to threats and little legal action, all charges were dropped, suggesting that the threat of legal action was intended to silence protest, not to curve illegal activity. But most important, the city of Atlanta and the State of Georgia used legal prowess to foil the efforts of those least protected by the law, at least as seen through the trudging pace of Atlanta City Hall to investigate the crime. This chapter will also focus on the tensions between Atlanta's black upper and middle classes and black working and poor classes as manifested through various episodes of the Atlanta Youth murders. Finally, this chapter will attempt to explain the city's willingness to place the charges of murders exclusively on Wayne Williams, a 23-year old charlatan posing as talent agent and freelance photographer who outfitted his car

with police lights to impress people, most notably children. Williams was a strange character, charged and convicted with the murders of Jimmy Rae Payne and Nathaniel Cater, victims both in their twenties as a result of a Georgia Law that allowed the prosecutors to use evidence from other cases as evidence against the accused. With this, Fulton County prosecutors placed the blame for all of the murders on Williams, an accommodationist and irresponsible tactic by local and state officials to alleviate fear and rebuke.

Discussions of the Atlanta missing and murdered children connected to a larger discourse of race in America, as many feared the resurgence of klan-like racism with an international reach. In fact, some believed that the murders were the handiwork of the Ku Klux Klan while others feared these acts to be a part of a federal government agency to carry out the killings, or a conspiracy with the FBI and the CIA and even Atlanta based Centers for Disease Control—to commit mass murder. According to Bernard Headley and FBI sources, there were others who believed that both the FBI and CIA were in diabolical cahoots with the Klan to murder black male children, whose bodies the CDC needed for penile experimentation. Segments of the Far Left saw the murders as tied to forces of institutionalized international oppression. The disappearance and killing of black children in America, and a stint of killings of immigrant black West Indian youth in Great Britain allegedly by British police—had broader historical implications to the right wing, reactionary politics of the Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher era. There were also a series of racially motivated murders of blacks in Buffalo, New York. The Atlanta murders were manifestations of racial oppression everywhere. However, and most important, there were sentiments amongst Atlanta's black working and poor classes that Atlanta City Hall and police forces were carrying out these horrific acts.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Headley, 2; Headley states that the public had recently learned of the Tuskegee study, begun in 1932, during which the national Public Health Service, and later the CDC, decided to observe four hundred black men

Black Body Snatchers

In the summer of 1979, the bodies of two black boys were found on a vacant lot on Niskey Lake Road located in southwest Atlanta. The murder of the two boys signaled the beginning of one of the darkest chapters in the history of the city of Atlanta. By the fall of 1980, fifteen of the Atlanta areas black children between the ages of 7 and 15 had been abducted or murdered. Eleven of these children had been found murdered and four of them were missing. At this time, two of the children were females and 13 were males. It was clear that there was a serial killer on the loose that targeted Atlanta's children of poverty living on the City's west, south and east sides. This dark episode known as Atlanta's Missing and Murdered children but was often referred to in public circles as the Atlanta Child Murders, highlighted Atlanta's increasing black underclass because all of the victims were black and poor children. The 1980 census indicated that 27 percent of Atlanta's population was living in poverty, which was a higher percentage of poor people than all but one American city, Newark. As such, poor blacks in Atlanta looked to Jackson for provisions and comfort.²⁶⁸

The Atlanta police bureau was headed by two African Americans, Reginald Eaves' successor and public safety commissioner Lee Brown and his chief of police, George Napper. In August of 1980, Brown announced that agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) suspected a pattern in the killings and were conducting the investigation as if the deaths of the

with syphilis without treating them. The subjects, who were recruited from churches and clinics through the South, were told only that they had the infected men what was then the standard of treatment: mercury and arsenic compounds. In 1947, when penicillin was found to be an effective treatment of syphilis, it was also withheld from the infected men. This study continued for decades, until Peter Buxton an epidemiologist for the Public Health Service turned lawyer went public which prompted the study to be halted immediately; See also, Trashinda Wright, interview by Maurice J. Hobson, Atlanta, GA, 26 October 2007; Lee Lescage, "Some Atlanta Murders Nearly Solved, FBI Chief Say," *Washington Post*, 14 April 1981 and Dick Gregory's theory on the Atlanta Child Murderer.

²⁶⁸ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Atlanta Child Murders Papers, Part 1.

children were related. However, this also proved to be a test for Mayor Maynard Jackson to show his prowess as a leader in a time of crisis centered on terror, not political infighting and economic development. In the past, one of Jackson's strong suits was his dealing with police brutality which was a major problem when he took office. Jackson had all but eliminated police brutality on poor blacks, a place where he received wide support from blacks. But months passed with no arrest and the mothers of Atlanta's missing and murdered children formed vocal support groups that criticized the mayor, along with others of black Atlanta's community. Jackson became the center of contempt and ridicule from blacks, particularly blacks that were part of Atlanta's working poor and poor communities. Gary Pomerantz wrote "for the moment, Maynard Jr. no longer was a symbol of racial progress, but a symbol of authority—authority was failing to protect black children."²⁶⁹ This was one of the few but clear cut cases where Atlanta's poor blacks turned against Jackson, seeing him as one that had gained notoriety and status with their support, but did nothing to protect their children.

The abduction and murdering of Atlanta's black children caused a range of emotions within the black community, both locally and nationally. Questions focused on whether this was the act of one serial killer, a group of serial killers working together, or a series of simultaneous and disconnected murders. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there had been no history of a black serial killer. The common sentiment within the black community was that no black person would commit these kinds of murder and that this was the work of a "typical" white serial killer.²⁷⁰ However, as time passed with no arrests or new leads, Jackson surmised that this had to

²⁶⁹ Gary M. Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: A Saga of Race and Family*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 476.

²⁷⁰ FBI Papers, Atlanta Child Murders, Part 1; Pomerantz, 476; Baldwin, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995); Tayari Jones, *Leaving Atlanta*, (New York: Warner Books, 2002); It was not until the case of the DC Sniper in the fall of 2002 where, it became clear that there were black serial

be the work of a black person, or a white person made to look as if he was black. In Atlanta's overwhelmingly black communities, white persons frolicking in the streets raised serious amounts of suspicion. If this were the case, blacks would have either retaliated against white killers themselves or turned the killer(s) in to the Atlanta police. Since this did not happen, the terror of the murders added a traumatic psychological factor where the killer(s) may prowl freely within the black community.

On the streets, the killer was referred to as the Man, a term ironically appropriated for the police. It was widely believed that the most suspicious population within the black community was Atlanta's black police. Black Atlanta had interesting episodes with the police since the City hired its first black police in the late 1940s. Amongst poor blacks, the sentiment was "if you must call a policeman—for God's sake, try to make sure it was a white one."²⁷¹ The sentiments expressed with this were that black policemen knew far more about blacks than whites did, and as such, the black community was without defenses before black officers for whom, it was widely believed, their entire reason for breathing seemed to be the hope to that, though they were black, they were not black like the masses. Black policeman knew that many elements of the community distrusted them, and there were some that viewed the police as the murderers of black children.²⁷²

The black community felt as if City Hall responded slowly because the missing and murdered children of Atlanta were characterized as "runaways and hustlers." This description was more indicative about how City Hall, black elites and the middle classes felt about children

killers. For 23 days, the DC, Maryland, and Virginia area were gripped with terror where ten people were killed and three people were critically wounded.

²⁷¹ James Baldwin, *Evidence of Things Not Seen*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995).

²⁷² Trashinda Wright, interview by Maurice Hobson, Atlanta, GA, 26 October 2007.

whose parents were at the bottom of the economic ladder. However, Jackson made sure that he was present within the black community. He went into the streets and attended three churches every Sunday. Gary Pomerantz notes that during the time of the murders, his own son, Maynard H. Jackson, III was almost ten years old, the same age as some of the boys found murdered or missing. This made these tragedies both real and personal to Jackson. For weeks, Jackson had declined interviews with the national television networks, fearing it would sensationalize the murders of black children on a national and international stage, which would hurt Atlanta's image as the "City too busy to hate." However, he eventually conceded to an interview with CBS reporter Ed Bradley, conducted at a local park while Maynard III played a little league baseball game. This interview displayed Jackson's compassion and expressiveness.²⁷³

By April of 1981, FBI Director, William Webster reported that three of the murders of Atlanta youth deemed disconnected from the patterned murders had been "substantially solved." According to FBI sources, the killers were not indicted for the murders because Georgia prosecutors were hesitant about pursuing criminal charges, in the event that it would weaken the chances of convicting a serial killer. However, Fulton County District Attorney Lewis Slaton denied that there was any intention to wait for any particular case. According to Slaton, he was not aware of the "sufficient evidence to indict anyone at the time." In this event, he stated, "If any case breaks and we've got the evidence, we'll proceed. We will not hold up a case to wait for another case."²⁷⁴ Webster did not indicate whether FBI evidence concluded that there was a single killer or more than one killer operating in concert. The fact that 30 FBI investigators and

²⁷³ Pomerantz, 477.

²⁷⁴ Lee Lescaze, "Some Atlanta Murders Nearly Solved, FBI Chief Says," *Washington Post*, 14 April 1981, A/1.

roughly 35 Georgia Bureau Investigators worked the cases with no results convinced Atlanta's black community that there was no real attempt to catch the killer.²⁷⁵

The STOP Committee

When the murders purportedly commenced in 1979, it had been estimated that more than 4,000 children were murdered annually in the United States, with many of the crimes going unreported. In 1979, the FBI listed 2,773 homicides involving children of different races brought together by the cruel bond of murder, sexual assault, and neglect. American children were being forced into prostitution, their bodies infused with drugs and their minds tormented with abuse. At that moment, there were 50,000 children that were missing or dead. With this frustration, Camille Bell, a former civil rights worker and mother of victim Yusuf Bell, along with six other victims' mothers founded the Committee to Stop the Murders of Children (STOP Committee) in May of 1980. The STOP Committee's mission for short term goals were to make it more difficult for potential murderers to commit more murders and abductions and to organize and combat more violent crimes against children. Their long term mission was to promote better and safer environments for children; to "remind each person that [they] were their brother's keeper; and to actively prevent physical, emotional, moral and educational murder of children." Along with their mission, the organization had nine objectives.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Atlanta Committee to Stop Children's Murder, Press Release, Maynard Jackson Collection, Robert Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center (AUC), 1980; The objectives are as follows: To bring together parents who have had the tragic experiences, so they can share their feelings; to raise one's level of consciousness through greater community awareness of the incidents which plague our future generations; to introduce programs to the community which will allow children to develop their full potential through self-awareness, education, morality training, etc. For example, to re-establish the Commandment "love ye one another" through organizing neighborhood watch groups in which adults would be assigned to accompany a child back and forth from home to

Almost as important as the protection of Atlanta's children, the STOP Committee also worked to dismiss the notion that their children were hoodlums or hustlers. They asserted that the children were ordinary and engaged in ordinary children's pursuits and that many of them were gifted and watched over their brothers and sisters when parents were absent. It was a network through which the murdered children's parents stayed in touch and worked to keep the memory of Atlanta's missing and murdered children afloat and in the public eye. Also, it served as an attempt to remedy the negligence they felt from City hall. The STOP Committee boldly challenged the City's slow response with resistance of its own. The group also prepared pamphlets on rules for child safety which they distributed in shopping centers and neighborhoods around Atlanta. Because the organization grew out of mothers grieving over the deaths of their children, STOP Committee mothers vehemently rebuked Maynard Jackson, Public Safety Director Lee P. Brown and police chief George Napper. As evidence of this, Camille Bell publicly referred to Mayor Jackson as "the Fat boy,"²⁷⁷

However, STOP Committee's rebuke towards Atlanta city officials was more than just mere name-calling as the group hosted a series of conferences to inform parents of how they could better protect their children from being "snatched". The Committee called for the establishment of a national computerized data bank for missing children that could be used to study and analyze solved and unsolved murder cases involving children. The Committee also called for a rally on May 25, 1981 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC, to focus on the

school; to make the community better and safer; to develop communications between parents and their children; to direct negative energies into positive ones; to focus on the development of the total personality, to prevent future occurrences of maladjusted behavior; to provide counseling to whomever needs it; and lastly to provide tutoring to all children operating below grade level as needed and as available.

²⁷⁷ FBI Papers, Atlanta Child Murders, Part 1; Also seen in James Baldwin, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1995, 55; Pomerantz, 476; Camille Bell, "Save the Children," *Washington Post*, 10 May 1981, B/7.

problems of children nationwide. The purpose of the rally was to raise the awareness on the war on American children. During one of her emotional outbursts, Bell, the spokeswoman for STOP Committee, stated, “Our children don’t learn in schools; they are dying on the streets; they are being used as sexual objects....kiddy porn flourishes, drugs are being pumped into their little systems. When these things happen to any group of people, you would consider it a war. Any nation that does not operate on a children-first basis is being suicidal.”²⁷⁸ Though the STOP Committee had not registered as a non-profit organization, they did gain endorsements by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), District 65 of the United Auto Workers and District of Columbia’s Mayor Marion Barry. As previously stated, the AFSCME fought tooth and nail against Maynard Jackson during the sanitary worker strikes of the 1970s. With the widespread criticism towards Jackson, AFSCME’s endorsement of the STOP Committee prolonged its fight with the mayor over the central question as to whether Jackson had the best interests of Atlanta’s working people in mind. Much of this can also be seen in the STOP Committee’s critique of the Mayor. Bell, as well as the STOP Committee, was critical of the inept response of Atlanta officials, asserting that missing ghetto children were more likely to be labeled as runaways instead of victims of crime. The STOP Committee pushed for Atlanta’s officials to call in the National Guard to help solve the cases.²⁷⁹

The most notable critique of the STOP Committee was City Hall’s slow response in forming a task force to investigate the murders. Bell asserted that her anger towards City Hall was not solely on the fact that she had lost her son Yusef to the killer, but because Atlanta’s black leaders had done little to prevent the crimes from happening. In Bell’s words, Atlanta

²⁷⁸ Eugene Robinson, “Atlanta Mothers Call for Rally Here,” *Washington Post*, 1 May 1981, A/38.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

officials acted as though their children had “dropped of the face of the earth.” But her most critical point was that it took City Hall too long to admit that a serial killer preyed on the city’s black and poor children. As Bell stated, “...the mayor has not come out and said there is a problem. There may be no connection, but that borders on ridiculous.” Bell’s ridicule was based on the fact that few of Atlanta’s public officials had publicly expressed outrage over abuse of its children, nor actively warned parents of the dangers, a situation that left Bell, and the rest of the mothers of the STOP Committee, hurt, confused and disgusted.²⁸⁰

In point of fact, it took Mayor Jackson from July of 1979, when the bodies of two boys were found of Niskey Road, to July of 1980 to create a task force to investigate the murders. By this time Bell and the Stop Committee had begun to cast the city’s neglect in terms of class division. She stated plainly, “I know that it can’t be because we’re black. It is because we’re poor! I think that it is time that he [Jackson] acted responsibly.” Of the murders, six of the boys either belonged to the YMCA or the Boy’s Club, ranged within eight inches of each other in height, was of brown complexion and wore a medium afro haircut. All of the victims hailed from low-income areas. Bell charged Police Chief George Napper with incompetence because of his consistent refusal to establish a connection between the murders, accused Mayor Jackson of “pussyfooting around,” and accused the public service commissioner of a “mealy-mouthed” response to the situation. Her tirade was indicative of the sentiments of black Atlantans in general—that too few public officials had expressed outrage regarding the serial killer of Atlanta’s poor black children. The STOP Committee had invited Jackson to all press conferences, meetings at Wheat Street Baptist Church, and other conferences around the city. Yet he did not attend. Bell and the STOP Committee regarded Jackson’s stance as insulting and

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

dismissive because, according to them, he never bothered to send a city representative to the meetings nor did he ever respond to an invitation to speak at the STOP Committee's conference. The opposition noted that Jackson found time to campaign for Governor Zell Miller, and yet "he couldn't find the time to be concerned about the kids of Atlanta." The mothers of the murdered and missing children were convinced that Jackson could at very least perform one important event, to get in front of the media and say, "Hey, Atlanta, there's a problem." After all, Jackson himself was a father of a 10 year old son.²⁸¹

Though Mayor Maynard Jackson bore the brunt of the STOP Committee's criticism, Bell's scathing denouncement of other political elites was also noteworthy. When white city councilwoman Elaine Williams Lester showed up to STOP Committee meetings, this provided a stage for Bell to lash out at other political brokers in the Atlanta area. To Bell, Lester's attendance of the meetings was seen as a gesture of genuine concern for Atlanta; however, it provided a stage for Bell to call out others. In this event, Bell stated, "Where were Q.V. Williamson, James Bond, Morris Finley, Marvin Arrington and Bill McKinney? When they wanted votes, they knew where to find us...right over there in McDaniel-Glenn [housing projects]." ²⁸² Bell's critique of the Atlanta's black political leaders pointed increasingly to class divisions between the city's black power structure, and its working class Black community. The charge that Atlanta's black political leaders only looked to Atlanta's poor for votes spoke directly to a feeling of class exploitation.

To Bell and the STOP Committee's credit, they were influential in getting police chief Napper to establish a five man task force—only after Bell appeared before the Public Service Committee meeting to lobby for its necessity. Also, Bell's outspokenness and detective work

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

provided the few known leads to police. Without her help, the only lead that the police had was that an early model blue Chevrolet Nova was the vehicle in which several of the missing and murdered children were last seen. But from Bell's perspective, the real issue with the lack of public acknowledgement hinged on political in-fighting within black political ranks. Angelo Fuster, Jackson's press secretary, rebuked the group's plea for help as a result of what he gleaned from the STOP Committee's newspaper coverage. Fuster felt as if Bell and the STOP Committee's were out to embarrass the Atlanta's black administration. Another account of this can be seen when Bell approached 35th District Representative Billy McKinney for help, he stated "the mayor's trying to get me thrown out of office. After the election, I will help you."²⁸³ But, more importantly, Atlanta's black administration's failure to address the abduction and murders of black children as a by product of political in-fighting was confusing and called for some poor blacks to begin seeking the election of a white mayor and administration. Evidence of this was seen when Bell stated, "Back when we had a white administration, every black person in this city would be out calling racism, but it can't be racism because Maynard's supposed to be black, but if it's not racism, what is it? I don't know why the mayor won't act. I just know that the mayor's types of people are not being hurt. I hope I'm wrong, but either he's surrounded by a bunch of incompetents or he just doesn't care. If white people don't care about black people, that's bad. But if black people don't care about black people, that's deplorable. Atlanta used to be the 'city too busy to hate,' don't tell me it's the 'city too busy to care' now."²⁸⁴ Again, Bell pointed directly to Jackson and the rest of the city's administration, making class rather than race the central issue. Bell's reference to the "mayor's kind of people" in later years was termed "our

²⁸³ Ibid; Notice how the emergence of Black political power has shifted the consciousness of oppression from race to class.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

kind of people,”²⁸⁵ a term associated with the exclusivity of black elites and as such, Bell’s reference situated Jackson’s elite background and pedigree to his negligence on Atlanta’s poor. Bell’s unsafe implication here is that Jackson, who was purportedly too busy conceding to white business interests, embodied the same kind of prejudice and angst that whites had against blacks; albeit Jackson’s prejudice and angst was towards poor blacks and “ghetto children.” If this was the case, Jackson’s black elite disposition was the same as, if not worse, than racist whites. It is not a question of better or worse or race versus class. Rather the unfolding of the Atlanta child murders under a Black political regime constructs new contradictions and shed light on long-standing contradictions that being poor is the source of a complex set of problems that do not disappear with the triumph of black political power.

In regards to the city and the missing and murdered children, Camille Bell’s critique of the city not only focused on city leaders, it focused on the activities of everyday rank and file police. Bell’s sentiments were that Atlanta police officers were not well-trained enough to handle a full investigation of the abduction and murders. Though Public Safety Commissioner Lee P. Brown authorized the establishment of the task force and made it larger, and operative 24 hours a day, it still took a year plagued with abductions and murders to make solving these mysteries the top priority. The police response in creating the task force was slow as police willingly admitted that the rash of slayings was very unusual. Before the episode known as the missing and murdered children of Atlanta, statistics show that the city averaged less than one such homicide a year. Bell’s own detective handiwork and establishment was far better than the police’s. Based on a pattern that she noticed, she predicted that another child would be murdered that week. Victim Clifford Jones was found murdered during that week, his body found in the

²⁸⁵ Lawrence Graham, *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class*, (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers Inc., 1999); Graham asserts that many light-skinned black elites measure success and status in juxtaposition to that of white America, and with this, Jackson’s purported discrimination towards Atlanta’s poor.

vicinity of the prediction. With this kind of foresight, Bell and the STOP Committee constructed their own task force, gathering useful information such as descriptions or characteristics of men who approached children who were “snatched” or about strangers in a given neighborhood. They also received the volunteer services of a private detective to supply the police task force with information.²⁸⁶

Bell’s activism raised awareness and fostered fellowship with other civil rights groups. Groups such as the SCLC could see that Bell’s investigative results made sense and gave some answers to the ailing black community. On October 5, 1980, the STOP Committee and the SCLC joined forces and rallied for Atlanta’s missing and murdered children as a group of 300 trekked along Auburn Avenue chanting and singing. The march began in front of the SCLC National Office and ended in the Central City Park Amphitheatre. As a show of the willingness to protect the youth, even if the city refused to do so, several groups of uniformed Boy Scouts joined the rally. In a soul stirring oratory, SCLC president Joseph Lowery asserted his disgust towards the economic development for Atlanta’s elites, while the black and poor continued to be underdeveloped and, some believed, even victims of genocide. Rev. Lowery challenged the community by stating, “Atlanta must not only boast of having the biggest airport in the world, but must also strive to be the community with the biggest heart in the world.” Along with his challenge, he chided City officials by asserting that City Hall was more interested in “who killed J.R.” than with who was killing Atlanta’ children, “the dream of brotherhood, and justice.” The crowd comprised mostly of those that lived in the most disparaging areas of the city, erupted and

²⁸⁶ Evelyn Newman, “Office Set Up For Committee to Stop Murder of Children,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 14 September 1980, 1.

gave the SCLC president a standing ovation.²⁸⁷ Lowery's oration asserted the sentiments towards City Hall, an administration that seemed to be more preoccupied with everything else in the world other than the concern for Atlanta's citizens.

In the week following the rally, an explosion rocked Bowen Homes, one of the Atlanta housing projects killing four children and a teacher. Among the dead were Kelvin Snelson, Andre Stanford, Ronald Brown, and Terrance Bradford, all three years old; along with their teacher Nell Robinson, 58 years of age. Immediately after the explosion, it was widely speculated by West Atlantans that a white supremacist organization was involved. As network news programs showed the bodies of black children being removed from rivers, streams, or grassy hillsides in Atlanta, a gesture of good faith came from the white business elite who worked closer with Jackson than any other time during his mayoral tenure. For example, the Central Atlanta Progress raised \$75,000 to build a replacement nursery center at Bowen Homes. The white business elite understood that the negative press generated by the murders was harming the city's commercial efforts. The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce joined to produce an advertising motto to boost morale that stated "Let's Keep Pulling Together, Atlanta."²⁸⁸ However, there was no evidence that the daycare explosion was the handiwork of criminal behavior and investigators concluded that the Atlanta Housing Authority's negligence in

²⁸⁷ Dennis McCluster, "People March for Children," *Atlanta Daily World*, 10 October 1980; the reference to "Who killed J.R.?" refers to "Who shot J.R.?" a question raised when in the award winning 1970s and 80s television show *Dallas*. In this, and at the end of the season, oil tycoon J.R. Ewing, played by Larry Hagman was shot and left audiences in a suspenseful manner as to who shot J.R. Ewing and whether or not he was dead.

²⁸⁸ Ibid; "Business Ready to Rebuild Nursery Here," *Atlanta Daily World*, 19 October 1980; this event was and is widely believed to be an act connected to Atlanta's Missing and Murdered children. However, the official conclusion was that it did not fit the pattern of previous killings of black children. There were some accounts that at the time of the explosion, blacks in Bowen Homes saw white men with gasoline cans running from the scene to a truck with the confederate flag in the window. This was indicative of Ku Klux Klan activity as seen in the bombing of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama where four black girls were killed in an act of terror.

maintaining the furnace was the cause of the blast.²⁸⁹ This conclusion did not sit well with black Atlanta's most vulnerable, a community that refused to believe that no foul play was involved. According to Pomerantz, after a community meeting at the Greater Fairhill Baptist Church, members were so enraged that Hosea Williams asked reporters to leave the meeting and led a twelve mile march to City Hall, in part to defuse the seething anger.²⁹⁰

On October 22, 1980, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran a picture of Maynard Jackson sitting behind a table stacked with \$100,000 in small bills of one, five, and ten dollar bills provided by First National Bank. This would be one of the most lasting images of missing and murdered episode and of modern Atlanta, as it was indelibly seared into the minds of Americans. This was reward money for anyone that came forward with information about the murders. For Jackson's skeptics, the picture resembled that of Boss Hog²⁹¹ counting his money. However, what was clear was that City Hall had to do anything possible to get leads that would help them solve these cases.

With influence and pressure from the STOP Committee, not only did members of the community join together to address the missing and murdered children as seen with the SCLC rally and the donation from the Central Atlanta Project, but local, state and national organizations donated their services as well. Organizations such as the Atlanta Bar Association sponsored a week of special police appreciation where speakers discussed the need to support the police and involvement in block watch type program; distributed bumper stickers, brochures, posters, and

²⁸⁹ "Furnace, Not Bomb Blew Up Nursery," *Atlanta Daily World*, 16 October 1980; "Police End Blast Probe," *Atlanta Daily World*, 2 November 1980; "Switch Cutoff Blamed for Center Blast," *Atlanta Daily World*, 2 November 1980.

²⁹⁰ Pomerantz, 478.

²⁹¹ Jefferson Davis "Boss" Hogg was a fictional character played by Sorrell Book depicted in the television series "The Dukes of Hazzard." Hogg was the County Commissioner for fictitious Hazzard County, Georgia and the wealthiest man in Hazzard County. He would do anything to get money, wore a white three-piece suit, a white Stetson cowboy hat, and smoked fine cigars.

buttons; established a scholarship fund for the dependents of police officers killed in the line of duty; and staged a noon rally in Central City Park during which citizens and police met to discuss the mutual goal of fighting crime. The Atlanta Board of Education distributed child safety brochures to each child enrolled in elementary and middle school levels, as coordinated by the SAFE program. Also, teachers on all levels discussed child safety tips in their classrooms. The Atlanta Bureau of Police Services Crime Prevention Unit conducted community forums and personal safety workshops regarding murdered and missing children. It also conducted door-to-door canvassing of neighborhoods for information relative to murdered and missing children and disseminated trading cards to youth. The Atlanta Bureau of Police Service Field Operations Division conducted and responded to preliminary investigations of related activities such as the reports of suspicious activities related to crimes in progress; encouraged collaboration between the Task Force, school crossing guards and school detectives on suspicious activities near schools. The Atlanta Bureau of Police Service—Missing Persons Unit investigated missing children reported, initiated investigation, organized search parties and collected physical evidence.²⁹²

Despite wide ranging criticism from the STOP Committee, Atlanta's City Hall, which housed the Mayor's Office and the Office of Community and Consumer Affairs, offered its aide to help the STOP Committee as a sign of good faith. Not only did they collect funds to rebuild Bowen Homes Daycare, but as a sign of his support, the Mayor Jackson had staffers to attend funerals for slain children. City Hall was also instrumental in coordinating financial contributions and words of inspiration to the family through letters and phone calls; providing flowers for the slain children; and solicitation and acquisition of monies in excess of \$150,000

²⁹² Missing and Murdered Children Response, Press Release, 12 November 1980, Maynard Jackson Collection, AUC.

for the reward fund leading to the arrest and conviction of persons responsible for the unsolved homicides; accepting contributions for families who received them through distribution from the STOP Committee; and assisting in the coordination of searches for the missing children. Though these gestures showed that Jackson held sympathy for the slain children, it did little to ease the panic of the city, and some saw his gestures as mere politicking.²⁹³ Interestingly the list provided shows evidence Jackson's continuous quagmire with President Jimmy Carter and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in his attempt to get federal help in solving the missing and murdered children cases.

The episode of the missing and murdered children of Atlanta exposed deeper and wider fault lines in the Black New South Atlanta. Clearly, Atlanta was not the poster child for black success and business as it had been portrayed. The fact that poor and black children were being hunted in the New South's rising capital contradicted the image of Atlanta as a black Mecca for those with education and skill level. Nonetheless Maynard Jackson continued his campaign to portray Atlanta as a cultural and commercial haven of yet another New South. Because Atlanta had successfully elected a black mayor to his second term in a city where the black middle classes enjoyed much success, black businesses from around the nation looked upon the attack on black children in Atlanta as a strike against their own thriving business communities. This

²⁹³ Ibid; According to the this document, there were a host of other groups that participated in helping the STOP COMMITTEE, some of which included Atlanta Dept. of Public Safety Bureau of Police Services; Atlanta Business Coalition; Atlanta Urban League; Atlanta Falcons; Coca-Cola Bottling Company; Coca-Cola USA; Dr. Lloyd Baccus; Birmingham, Michigan Task Force; Bureau of Civil Defense, Dept. of Public Safety; City of Atlanta, Office of the City Council; Coalition '80; Coalition to Save Our Children; Colorado Springs Police Dept., Colorado Springs, Colorado; Community Relations Services U.S. Dept. of Justice; Connecticut State Prison; DeKalb County Police; Department of Public Safety Bureau of Fire Services; East Point Police Department; Economic Opportunity Atlanta; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Fulton County Police Dept.; Fulton County Superior Court District Attorney's Office; Georgia Bureau of Investigation; Georgia Criminal Information Center; Attorney Terry L. Lenzer; Management Information Systems, City Hall; Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority; Metropolitan Atlanta YWCA; Munford, Inc.; NAACP; Northside Jaycees; Office of Public Affairs; Police Executive Research Forum; Project 12; Safer Atlanta for Everyone; Southern Bell Company; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; United Youth Adult Conference; and Women Against Crime.

can be best seen in a letter written from Pro-Line Corporation, a company that specializes in hair products for African Americans housed in Dallas, Texas. In the letter, Director of Public

Relations Lydia Furry wrote:

As a corporate entity we would like to express our concern through some meaningful involvement. Although you have been promised financial assistance from the government, it is our premise that those of us in black businesses should also reach out to help our own people.

If you would assist me by informing for suggesting to me some significant role we could play in bringing this nightmare to an end, please call me here at Pro-Line Corporation.

Maybe we could send out the call to our corporate peers and make a joint financial commitment regarding this endeavor.²⁹⁴

This letter spoke to the terms in which black communities around America looked to Atlanta.

The reference to “our children” further asserts Atlanta’s black Mecca status because it showed that Atlanta’s notoriety as a booming black city and the vanguard of black business. With this, it was apparent that in the black business communities, proprietors felt not only kinship to Atlanta, but citizenship as well because of the inclusive nature of the letter, which put Atlanta, Dallas, and other cities with a strong black business presence, in the same community connoted in the use of the word “our.” With this, it was important that Atlanta remain as the capital of black business, even as the abduction and murders of black children marred the city’s image.

Attention to the missing and murdered children of Atlanta also commanded attention and responses from black celebrities. Actress Ester Rolle called for the total community to come together and realize that there was a serious problem. Rolle also suggested that focusing on the positive activities of Atlanta’s youth would help to solve the cases and ease tensions.²⁹⁵ Rolle’s

²⁹⁴ A Letter to Maynard Jackson from Lydia Furry, 10 February 1981, Maynard Jackson Collection, AUC.

²⁹⁵ Evelyn Newman, “Parents of Missing Children Call For Togetherness Here,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 16 October 1980.

character, Florida Evans, from the popular black sitcom “Good Times” qualified her as an advocate who debunked myths about ghetto black children as hustlers. In the show, she played the wife of a working mother of three gifted black children raised in the most abject poverty of Chicago’s public housing. A benefit hosted by two members of the famed Rat Pack, Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. raised \$280,000. The famous novelist, playwright, poet, essayist, and civil rights activist James Baldwin was prompted to write an essay in Playboy Magazine which in 1985 turned into his famous book *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, a scathing critique that examined the relationship between the murders and the larger issue of race in America and recapitulated themes throughout Baldwin’s masterpieces, the connection of the oppressed and the oppressor, and government mistreatment of poor blacks. But Baldwin’s account asserted that the conviction of Wayne William failed to prove his guilt beyond a shadow of a doubt and uncovers some of the theories and beliefs of Atlanta’s poor and black communities, whose children had fallen prey. Interestingly, Baldwin described the aforementioned benefit hosted by Davis and Sinatra, as “buck-dancing on the graves” of the missing and murdered youth.²⁹⁶

After a series of meetings in which Jackson attempted to sequester the FBI to help with finding the killer of poor black children, President Jimmy Carter, in a press conference, promised a group of black ministers that he would do whatever possible to help in the investigation. Carter’s “deep disturbance” for the citizens in his home state that had elected him to Governor in 1971, did not influence the dispatching of FBI agents to Atlanta. It was not until an anonymous call to the mother of Earl Terrell that stated that the boy was unharmed and in Alabama, that FBI became active. The fact that a child was purportedly transported across state lines made the abduction a federal offense. Along with the FBI’s help, came Dorothy Allison, a psychic from

²⁹⁶ Baldwin, 11.

New Jersey. Allison was brought in to assist police with hopes that her psychic ability would bring forth information. She toured areas where the victims had been found and concluded that at least one of the killers was a black man and believed that there was more than one killer.²⁹⁷

The efforts of Camille Bell and the STOP Committee, in terms of fundraising, were not the only efforts by organizations to raise funds. Other fundraising and support activities took place across the nation. One thousand marched in Chattanooga, Tennessee chanting, “We want it stopped.” In Columbus, Ohio, a “Columbus Cares” slogan raised \$37,000 given to the City of Atlanta. A grandmother in Philadelphia started a green ribbon campaign. A candlelight vigil was organized by 30 groups in Harlem. Members of the recording industry raised money for the families of the slain children. The Coalition for Black Colleges and the National Black Child Development Institute called for black ribbons with the slogan, “We Must Do More!” President Ronald Reagan, in an unprecedented move, gave Atlanta an additional \$1.5 million to help finance their investigation. These efforts showed that the killings of black children in Atlanta precipitated a new look at the condition of black children in America, with Atlanta holding center stage. Americans across the country were wearing ribbons—some green, some black, some red. They were a symbol for the special horror and sense of concern for the murdered and missing black children.²⁹⁸ These widespread activities showed that the attention that Atlanta warranted was not solely based on grief from death, but the embarrassment that came for the city administration’s inability to find the killer(s). With this notion, tourists questioned what need they had to go to Atlanta.

²⁹⁷ FBI Papers, Atlanta Child Murders, Part 1.

²⁹⁸ Tony Brown, “Tony Brown’s Journal, Black Children: Can We Do More,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 2 April 1981, 4.

However, the eagerness to donate to the cause of finding the killer(s) and healing the community presented new problems for the STOP Committee. When citizens in New York City were eager to donate money to help the families of slain children, Mayor Maynard Jackson asserted that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Family Fund was the only legitimate charity distributing money to the victims' families and that donations could be received at P.O. Box 4485, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303.²⁹⁹ This, in turn, pitted and portrayed other organizations collecting money as rogue groups, using the charities for profit.

Meanwhile, the STOP Committee negligence to register as 501 © (4) status gave law makers an opening to quell the efforts of the organization that loudly criticized local, state and federal officials for negligence. To some Atlantans, Camille Bell seemed an embarrassment because of her uncompromising stance that no one had the authority to collect money for the children but the parents of the children. The STOP Committee had gone nationally and internationally to raise money not only for the families of Atlanta's children but for children in general and further blister Atlanta's City hall. Following the threat of prosecution by Tim Ryles, the director of the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs, the STOP Committee was expected to file for charity organization status as the first step of many hurdles that the organization needed to avoid possible criminal charges. The threat of prosecution was based on the fact that the STOP Committee was purportedly collecting donations for families of victims and for other events. This brought up questions of accountability towards donations and how monies collected were being used. Ryles threatened that "If they [could not] account for the money that was raised, if they cannot account for how it [was] spent, if they [were] unable to show at the end of the year that 70 percent of the money went for the purposes for which it was collected, then [they

²⁹⁹ "JEB Lines from NYC," *Atlanta Daily World*, 9 April 1981.

were] potentially liable for some fairly serious penalties.”³⁰⁰ The threats made by Ryles were welcomed by City Hall because Bell’s attacks on the administration not only gave voice to the murdered children, but, more important, they opened up a critique of black middle class sentiments towards poor black children. The STOP Committee’s critique of the city, to sum it up, aired the political infighting within Atlanta as manifested in tensions between the black power structure and ordinary black citizens.

In an effort to be compliant with the Governor’s Office of Consumer Affairs, the STOP Committee reported that it had collected nearly \$40,000 and had expenditures of more than \$15,000 in donations to families of missing and murdered young blacks. When officers Camille Bell and Venus Taylor filed for non-profit status on August 19, 1980, they listed the purpose of their fund-raising activities as “aid for summer camps for Atlanta Children who [were] showing symptoms of psychological effects of the Atlanta Children’s murders.” However, little or no money collected in the first six months of the STOP Committee’s existence went to summer camps. Most of the early donations were designated by donors for distribution to families of victims. The STOP Committee claimed to have raised money through direct mail, personal and telephone solicitation, benefit performances, appearances of celebrities, and the sale of t-shirts and buttons. From October through December of 1980, the STOP Committee reported that it raised \$8,476.69 and spent \$8,080.43 with mothers of victims receiving \$929 in small amounts. From January to March of 1981, the Committee reported income of \$30,581.22 with expenditures of \$18,366.09, with \$14,808 of that going to 22 relatives of victims. Most of the relatives were mothers of slain children and received \$677.50 each. The report also listed \$44.50

³⁰⁰ Mark Mayfield, “Special Task Force Improved, District Attorney Slaton Says,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 4 June 1981.

expenditure for the funeral of victim Charles Stevens.³⁰¹ With these figures, the STOP Committee welcomed any investigation by the Office of Consumer Affairs.

As the STOP Committee welcomed an investigation, Tim Ryles of the Office of Consumer Affairs vowed to seek a subpoena for group of mother's fund-raising records unless they voluntarily complied with Georgia's charitable solicitation laws. Though the STOP Committee provided financial reports, they did not provide bank records and ledgers to validate the two quarters reported on June 30, 1981. To the Office of Consumer Affairs, of the approximate \$40,000 collected, about half that amount was paid to relatives of slain young blacks. Georgia law required that 70 percent of donations go for the charitable purposes outlined in a solicitation—with a ceiling of 30 percent of administrative costs. The law also required annual audits of charitable operations collecting more than \$50,000, a level that would be attained before the end of the year. If the Committee was found in violation of the law, it could be fined, enjoined from raising more money and there could be criminal action.³⁰²

Because the STOP Committee had turned in two reports deemed unsatisfactory and had failed to meet a September 30th deadline set by Tim Ryles, legal action was sought against the group due to Ryles' weariness of waiting for STOP Committee's compliance with state charity laws. Before Ryles' threat, the group announced plans to disband and form a new organization that would collect money to help with counseling and rehabilitation efforts for children suffering psychological damage from two years worth of murders to Atlanta's children. The logic of the disbandment was that there would be no need to supply financial reports to the Office of Consumer Affairs because the group no longer existed. To Ryles, the use of this tactic by a

³⁰¹ William Cotterell, "Committee to Stop Children Murders Reports \$40,000," *Atlanta Daily World*, 3 July 1981.

³⁰² William Cotterell, "Subpoena May Be Sought To Get Mothers' Records; More Indictments on Suspect Seen," *Atlanta Daily World*, 21 July 1981.

group refashioning itself to re-establish its credibility raised serious doubts about the integrity of the organization. The STOP Committee disbandment and refashioning was a mockery for reasons that it came to avoid requirements of the law. Ryles and the Office of Consumer Affairs were spent on trying to track the ebb and flow of income and found it every difficulty to establish an audit trail. After being given three months to comply and the fact that the STOP Committee collected income of more than \$50,000 for the year which required that the annual report be certified by an accountant, opened a full investigation of the committee by local and state auditors.³⁰³ Ryles and the Office of Consumer Affairs would stifle the might of the STOP Committee, however, evidence of misappropriation would be exposed and bruise the credibility of the organization.

On October 20, 1981, Tim Ryles charged the officers of the STOP Committee for abusing the public's trust and making a mockery of the law. The three officers charged were Camille Bell, Willie Mae Mathis and Venus Taylor, all mothers of slain children. Through an ongoing investigation, officers uncovered that Venus Taylor used \$800 of committee money to pay for a plastic surgery procedure known as a "tummy tuck." With this, Ryles vowed to seek criminal and civil misconduct charges against the organization. The STOP Committee stated that it had raised about \$90,000 but all indications showed that the Committee actually raised about \$40,000. The inflation of the purported amount in the committee's statement allowed for the \$50,000 difference between the actual collected evidence to charade as a figure closer to the 70 percent expenditure mark required by Georgia law. Members of the group had committed a series of other violations which included failure to file an annual audit conducted by a certified public accountant and was required by law. On the day the charges were filed, the Bell, Mathis

³⁰³ "Court Action Seen Against Committee to Stop Children's' Murder Over Solicitations," *Atlanta Daily World*, 8 October 1981.

and Taylor brought Ryles a statement indicating that the STOP Committee had insufficient funds to pay a Certified Public Accountant to conduct an audit. Other violations were failure to register as a charity, failure to file quarterly fund-raising reports and claiming sponsors that did not exist. Also, Ryles charged the refashioned group with violation of a Georgia law that prohibited a group from using a name that was “confusingly similar to another organization.” It was evident that Ryles sought to prosecute the women asserting “had he had the authority to prosecute the STOP officers...they would be in jail.” With this, Ryles asked local prosecutors to proceed with criminal action. These charges called for the STOP Committee to file suit on October 26, 1981, asking that Tim Ryles be stopped from harassment and whether the new group was responsible for the old group’s debt. With the threat of conviction, Camille Bell admitted that the STOP Committee made some fundraising mistakes “out of ignorance” but asserted that the committee had no intention of violation the law. In late December, attorneys for the STOP Committee negotiated with the state of Georgia for a settlement of two civil suits.³⁰⁴ However, it seemed that the real charges against the STOP Committee were that they had alerted the nation and the world to the fact that there was indeed a problem raging in the “city too busy to hate.”

The Bat Patrol

In another attempt to help protect black children, a movement of armed resistance grew amongst those within Atlanta as citizens took the law into their own hands. The most notable of these armed groups was the Bat Patrol, a group of citizens from Techwood Homes whose adults

³⁰⁴“Stop Child Murders Committee Officials Abused Public’s Trust,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 22 October 1981; Vincent McCraw, “Mothers of Missing Children Negotiate Settlement of Suit, As Jury Selection Continues,” *Atlanta Daily World*, 31 December 1981.

carried firearms and teenagers carried baseball bats as they secured their housing project from suspected killers. The Bat Patrol, also dubbed the Ron Carter Patrol in honor of the slain Black Panther activist, acted as a protective agent in providing security for community children. Interestingly, the Bat Patrol was founded on the March 20, 1981, the same day that mentally retarded resident Eddie Lee Duncan went missing. Organized by Chimurenga Jenga, Techwood Tenant Association spokesman, initially it was not clear as to the number of members that patrolled Techwood, Atlanta's largest housing project. Jenga, a black radical, had been at the forefront of other demonstrations seen in Atlanta. His radical approach of armed resistance was seen by some in Techwood Homes as agitation. However, they conceded that it was a necessary measure to ensure that the children of Techwood Homes were safe.³⁰⁵

To Atlanta City Hall, the Bat Patrol's armed resistance was problematic. It suggested that Atlanta's black city administration was incapable of protecting black citizens, shining more light on the popular negative sentiments towards the mayor and City Hall. To combat this, Jackson commissioned the police and city attorneys to "explore the legal parameters" of the community setting up armed patrol. To Bat Patrollers, Jackson's strategy was not because of legal implications, but because citizens were protecting their own communities better than Atlanta police. The sentiments held by City Hall and some members of the Techwood Homes community were predicated on the idea of teens as well as adults carrying weapons with intentions of using them on anyone appearing to be abducting a child. Some citizens felt that the Bat Patrol drew unwarranted attention to their community and would result in the abductions and the murders of additional Techwood children. Others did not understand the need for bats or guns. With this, Jackson asserted that the job of patrolling the community for such incidents

³⁰⁵ Vincent McCraw, "Tenants Patrol in Action," *Atlanta Daily World*, 22 March 1981: Duncan's body was pulled from the Chattahoochee River on March 31, one day after the body was 13 year old Timothy Hill was found floating in the same area less than one-half mile away.

belonged to the police force and he cautioned Jenga and the rest of the Bat Patrollers to allow police to do their job or run the risk of not only harming themselves, but Techwood children.³⁰⁶ For this reason, the Atlanta Police Department asked the Bat Patrol to discontinue their patrols and leave law enforcement to them. The Bat Patrol's refusal to adhere to this request resulted in an opening to dismember the group by City Hall based on Atlanta law and policy.

One of the compromising aspects of Bat Patrol members was that the organization was not tactically exclusive. Techwood Homes, Atlanta's largest housing project was more diverse than many of the housing projects in the city's West End, which had overwhelmingly black populations. The foundation of the organization comprised of radical blacks and excluded whites, however, at least three of the patrolmen: Gene Ferguson, Jerome Gibbs and Modibo Kadalie were all prohibited from carrying weapons because of prior convictions. With this, they were charged with weapons violations. Jenga was initially charged with six counts; which included carrying a pistol without license, carrying a concealed weapon at a public gathering, obstructing a police officer, disorderly conduct, reckless conduct and obstructing an officer. In the Fulton County State Court, these charges were misdemeanors and carried a maximum fine of \$1,000 and up to one year in prison. This aggressive approach using law asserted the City's stance against armed patrol. Deputy Police Chief Eldren Bell assured the public that "if they carried weapons either concealed or otherwise...they would be arrested."³⁰⁷

Patterned after the Black Panther Party of Self-Defense, the Bat Patrol promoted black power and self defense through social agitation. The similarities between the groups fostered sentiments of the black power movement that embodied the components of provocative rhetoric

³⁰⁶ "Patrol Force Unnecessary Trouble," *Atlanta Daily World*, 24 March 1981, 6; "Vigilantes Continue Marching," *Atlanta Daily World*, 24 March 1981.

³⁰⁷ "Bat Patrol Will Carry Weapons Still," *Atlanta Daily World*, 3 April 1981.

and militant posturing. Just as FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover declared that the Black Panthers as a threat to internal security, it became clear that Maynard Jackson and City Hall shared similar sentiment towards the Bat Patrol. The group's resistance to political threats of incarceration if caught with weapons and dialogue with City Hall turned into a showdown resembling that of the Black Panther Party of Self Defense's circumstances with the state of California in the 1960s and 70s. With this, Israel Green, President of the Techwood Homes Tenants Association in Jenga's absence and co-founder of the Bat Patrol stated, "Nothing will stop our patrols. We will carry weapons but they will be concealed. IF we have to arm people on the roofs, we'll do it."³⁰⁸

The arrival of the Bat Patrol and their subsequent vigilante status also spoke to other issues seen in Atlanta. Unlike other central cities, it was far too easy to get hand guns in Atlanta. The Guardian Angels of New York, who had converged on the city for a three week stay with the intentions of helping catch the killer(s), left the city bewildered at the fact that guns could be purchased at grocery stores. In Georgia, the criteria for purchasing a gun were a driver's license and adult status. Guns were sold at K-Mart and other popular retail stores. The sentiments expressed by the Guardian Angels seemed counter productive to the Bat Patrol, a group that believed in the second amendment as did most of the southern states, and can be seen through relaxed gun laws in the said region. Because the Guardian Angels went to Atlanta to persuade Atlanta's children to band together and not resort to using weapons, they were instrumental in delivering the deathblow to the Bat Patrol. Their presence in the city prompted a city-wide Advisory Council on Public Housing, which represented 18 of the 25 public housing projects in the city that would provide patrols and organize search parties.³⁰⁹ However, it should be noted

³⁰⁸ Rhonda Cook, "Drowning Here May Be Linked with Deaths of Atlanta Children," *Atlanta Daily World*, 3 April 1981.

³⁰⁹ "Hand Guns in Atlanta 'Far Too Easy to Get,'" *Atlanta Daily World*, 3 April 1981.

that the Guardian Angels, deemed fraudulent themselves, were not well received by black Atlantans and considered interlopers, were unfamiliar with Atlanta's black community and people, the primary targets of the killers. Because City Hall knew this, they were able to counter wide spread sentiments felt by Atlanta's black and poor and enacted a more systematic approach to patrol which further marginalized armed resistance.

The patrols were established by citizen volunteers was called the Watch Patrol. The Watch Patrol was created by the United Youth Adult Conference, which was led by Councilman Arthur Langford, and brought together citizen volunteers with band radios trained by the police. With this, they worked with the police, not as agitators. Their primary concern was to enforce the 7a.m. to 7 p.m. curfew in the city. The group planned to flood the streets with one to two thousand volunteers during the summer months when hundreds of thousands of school children would need supervision. Along with the development of the Watch Patrol and the start of the summer months, Public safety commissioner Lee P. Brown appealed youth to travel in groups at all times. Brown also pointed out that all of the abductions occurred when the victim was alone and stressed the importance of parents insuring their children to be aware of that fact at all time.

To black Atlantans, the episode of the 29 murdered black children and young adults was one of Atlanta's greatest tragedies. However, what was just as great was the city's inability to end the tragedy bringing the murderer(s) to justice. This inability derived from a lack of appropriate police investigation early compounded with a lack of guidance from the Mayor's office and jurisdictional disputes. But most important, the implicit silent consensus of the city on the part of black and white leaders was the greatest tragedy.³¹⁰ All of this would come to terms as candidates vied for the city's top position with elections in the fall of 1981. What was most

³¹⁰ Roy Patterson, "An Open Letter to the Mayor and Citizens of Atlanta," *Atlanta Daily World*, 5 June 1981.

evident about this situation was that none of the candidates running, including the subsequent winner Andrew Young, spoke to the issues of the missing and murdered children at length. From all of the evidence shown, none of the candidates took a strong position as to how to end this tragedy and further safeguard the people of Atlanta.

The inability for Atlanta police to apprehend the killers left room for all manner of rumor, gossip and speculation. Yet, it was widely believed that had the victims been white, the reaction from the white community would have been vociferous and sustained until justice was bestowed. There existed also the widely held belief that if any of the victims had been from the black middle classes, Atlanta's administration would have acted with more firmness and dispatch. Moreover, the popular political sentiment within Atlanta's working and poor classes was that if the city's administration was white, the black community would have descended upon City Hall in a storm of protest, accusing the Mayor and his Commissioners of racism. The fact that the black community had not exerted the same kind of pressure on the Jackson administration spoke of its hypocrisy. But, as the black community treated the city's administration with kid gloves, 29 young Atlantans lost their lives. When Maynard Jackson and his administration finally decided that the city of Atlanta was faced with a crisis, he asked for and received federal financial assistance. When he asked that the reward fund be increased, it was. When he asked for federal agents to aid the investigation, though it was a struggle, he was granted that request also. When he asked citizens to rally and protect their own children and their neighbors, the citizens of Atlanta responded with a massive "kid watch" effort. All that Jackson asked the community to do was done, and yet the murders continued.³¹¹ Because class was perceived as the fundamental source of Atlanta's neglect, what resonated was that even within class race matter namely, if the murdered children had been poor whites, the response would have been quicker

³¹¹ Ibid.

and more forceful. This asserts that even within black class structures, a race analysis is pertinent.

The black citizens of Atlanta who had elected Jackson and the members of the Atlanta City Council had a right and moral responsibility to call for an accounting. It was necessary for the Atlantans to expect, and not hope, that the murderer(s) would be stopped and brought to justice. What was needed was for all Atlantans, in a collective voice, to attack City Hall. The Atlanta City Council, though it did not have executive responsibilities, needed to reflect the feelings of its constituents by pressuring Jackson's administration to resolve the murders.

Snapshot....The Guilt and Innocence of Wayne Williams

With pressure from local groups, the Atlanta Police bureau linked a dozen of the murders through a pattern initially calculated by the STOP Committee mothers. It was clear that the victims were all from South Atlanta, mostly black males, and had all been strangled to death. There was evidence of sexual molestation and the computer data base matched known pedophiles to Lubie Geter and Timothy Hill. Hill had admitted to a sexual liaison with pedophiles prior to his death. Victim Clifford Jones was last seen at a laundromat that was known as a pick up spot for homosexual liaisons. Three witnesses saw the laundromat manager go into a back room with a boy fitting Jones' description. One of the witnesses claimed to see the manager strangle and beat the boy and then carry his body out to the trash container. FBI records showed that the laundromat manager was subjected to two polygraph tests, in which he failed and admitted to knowing Jones and confirming that the boy had been at the laundromat at the time of his disappearance. Medical experts determined that the time of Jones' death was

between four and six hours before the discovery of his body which placed the victim at the laundromat at the time of his death. However, the FBI and Atlanta police did not charge the manager with any crime because the eyewitness who gave his account was deemed mentally retarded. Other witnesses came forward with similar stories, but to no avail.³¹² This account lent credence to the different threads and distinct patterns prevalent in the murders, all of them necessary to better understand Wayne Williams' framing.

Four of the final bodies had been dumped into the South and Chattahoochee Rivers and because of this; police officers patrolled the James Jackson Parkway Bridge spanning the Chattahoochee River in Atlanta's West Side. In the early morning of May 22, 1981, police officers spotted a blue Chevrolet slowly crossing the bridge and claimed that they heard a loud splash. The officers stopped the car and found 23-year-old Wayne Bertram Williams.

Wayne Williams was born in Atlanta, Georgia on May 27, 1958 and lived with his school teaching parents in Dixie Hill, a neighborhood in West Atlanta where many of the victims once lived or were abducted. He graduated from Frederick Douglass High School and had attended Georgia State University to pursue a career in entertainment, but dropped out to become a talent agent, freelance photographer, and edited demo tapes for local artists. Williams' lack of success disappointed his parents, who had spoiled him and funded his quixotic and lofty ideas. He dreamed of being successful as a broadcasting and entertainment agent. Williams had started his own radio station in his parents' basement when he was sixteen. Of the many people that he impressed and interviewed, the most prominent was then U.S. Congressman Andrew Young.³¹³

³¹² FBI Papers, Atlanta Child Murders; See also http://www.crimelibrary.com/serial_killers/predators/williams/indez_1.html.

³¹³ FBI Papers, Atlanta Child Murders; See also Baldwin, 117.

After dropping out of college, Williams worked for a radio station owned by civil rights leader Benjamin Hooks. It was in this venue that he honed his skills in promoting his own station and Atlanta's rising musical talents. His job duties in radio entailed odd jobs that funded his ideas and gave him ample time to try out electronics, which was a hobby of his. But contracting the odd jobs also put him in close proximity to children who were willing to perform jobs for money. As part of his side jobs, Williams sold video footage of citywide accidents, such as fires, car accident, and in one instance, a plane crash. He heard about the incidents from a police scanner and wiring his car with police lights, he would often arrive at the scene before police.³¹⁴

As a talent agent, Williams set out to find the next popular culture sensation such as the Jackson Five or Stevie Wonder and go all the way to the top with the likes of Berry Gordy as their promoter and manager. With this, he spent a considerable amount of time scouting black youth talent shows and interacting with boys that he thought had talent. Williams had an eye for performance, but lacked the savoir-faire to select boys who were talented musicians. His money making schemes should have been characterized as scams. His parents, trying to promote their son with hopes that he would become successful, filed for bankruptcy as a result of funding recordings of local boys with less than stellar talent. To add insult, Williams was known as a charlatan around Atlanta, where he claimed that he was at the center of record deals and ran in circles with big time producers.³¹⁵ Suspicions of Williams furthered when the nude body of Nathaniel Cater appeared in the Chattahoochee River on May 24, 1981, two days after being

³¹⁴ FBI Papers, Atlanta Child Murders; and http://www.crimelibrary.com/serial_killers/predators/williams/indez_1.html.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

question on the James Jackson Parkway Bridge. With the emergence of Cater's body, police speculated that Williams had killed the man and thrown him off the bridge on May 22nd.

Williams gave conflicting stories about his reasons for being on the bridge on May 22 while being interrogated by the FBI without legal representation. Williams claimed that on May 22, he played basketball at the Ben Hill Recreation Center and later went to Sans Souci Lounge to retrieve his recorder from the midnight hour club manager so that he could audition Cheryl Johnson, an aspiring songstress who lived in the Spanish Trace Apartments in Smyrna, a western suburb. Williams stopped at a convenience store to call Johnson moments before he was pulled over and questioned. However, the problematic aspects of Williams' account were that the police found no Cheryl Johnson or Spanish Trace apartment and the phone number that he purportedly called was fraudulent. According to FBI files, Williams was given three polygraph tests, all of which indicated dishonesty in his answers.³¹⁶

Williams fit the profile of a serial killer. He lived with his parents and was considered a loner. Bernard Hedley asserted that Williams had the uncanny ability to masquerade as a police officer. In 1976, this behavior landed Williams in jail for impersonating an officer and unauthorized use of a vehicle. As stated earlier, he had illegally added red lights beneath the grill and flashing blue dashboards lights to his car. There were rumors that he was homosexual, but these accusations were unfounded. Also, to add to his mystique, Dettlinger asserts that in the days following the event on the bridge, Williams and his father cleaned their house from top to bottom, carrying off boxes and burning photographs and negatives on an outdoor grill. Williams then called a press conference at his home, distributing his resume full of fabrication. At the press conference, Williams asserted that the police's apprehension and interrogation attempted to

³¹⁶ Ibid; duly noted is that polygraph tests are inaccurate in terms of discerning truth and untruth. It merely measures changes in breathing rate, blood pressure, perspiration and pulse.

railroad him as the Atlanta Youth killer.³¹⁷ This would be the first event in a long media frenzy where Williams became totally complicit in his conviction.

As the FBI investigated Williams, laboratory results claimed to find fibers and canine hair follicles on numerous victim bodies synonymous with those found in Williams' car and home. Also, results reported that these hair follicles were identical to that of Williams' dog. Though the FBI considered this evidence a breakthrough, District Attorney Lewis Slaton was skeptical because he did not want to prosecute Williams with fiber evidence as the sole evidence. Slaton felt that conventional evidence would satisfy the jury. With this, several considerable but subjective accounts emerged that coaxed Slaton to prosecute pursue Williams. Of these accounts, a number of witnesses materialized who avowed they saw Williams with various victims; a couple of recording studio people claimed to have seen abrasions on Williams' arms suggesting that he had been in a struggle; and pressure by Georgia Governor George Busbee to cooperate with the FBI. On June, 21, 1981, William's attorney, Mary Welcome and town deputy sheriffs arrived at the Williams home with an arrest warrant. Williams was indicted for the murders Jimmy Payne and Nathaniel Cater. However, Georgia Law allowed the prosecution to bring evidence from other cases if they helped to establish a pattern.³¹⁸ However, what is particular about the "hard" evidence that persuaded Slaton was that none of the eye witnesses came forward for the task force and Williams was not a suspect until after he had been stopped on the bridge by police. To some, FBI leads were suspicious because it was not clear why witnesses helped the FBI but did not cooperate with the Atlanta Police task force.

³¹⁷ Ibid; see also Chet Dettlinger and Jeff Prugh, *The List*, (Atlanta: Phimay Enterprises, Inc, 1983).

³¹⁸ Ibid; also, this "hard" evidence was subjective because none of the eye witnesses came forth for the Task Force. Williams had not been a suspect until being stopped by police on the bridge.

Attorney Mary Welcome was the lead lawyer in Williams' defense in the case. Controversies with the case ran rampant for numerous reasons. First, the selection of Judge Clarence Cooper, the first black judge elected to the Fulton County bench, to preside over the case proved to be contentious. Cooper had been an assistant district attorney and was an associate of District Attorney Lewis Slaton along with assistant district attorney Jack Mallard, a member of Slaton's prosecution team. This appeared to be a match that compromised justice considering that he had former colleagues that were prosecuting Williams. However, the Fulton County Courts asserted that a computer program chose Cooper through random selection. Another controversial situation was that murder victim Jimmy Ray Payne's autopsy listed his cause of death as undetermined, and it was not clear if Payne was murdered. However, when prosecutors recognized the difficulty in trying Williams for an undetermined death, Payne's death certificate was mysteriously reissued by the coroner with the status of homicide as the cause of death. The medical examiner asserted that he checked the wrong box. Interestingly, in that section of a Georgia death certificate, there was no check box, but a fill in the blank.³¹⁹ Again, these inconsistencies lent credence to the public's skepticism of whether Williams committed the Atlanta Youth Murders.

Opening arguments for the trial began on January 6, 1982. The defense team lacked the funds to employ the quality of expert witnesses to refute the FBI and GBI crime lab results. Also, there was not sufficient time to interview hundreds of prosecution witnesses. The mounting forensic evidence was much more than the defense was prepared to fight but was the foundation for how the prosecution proceeded with the expertise of an FBI scientist. This showcased the use of new technology established to fight crime. To cast doubt among the jury comprised of nine women and three men, eight black and four white, the defense needed to hire expert textile

³¹⁹ FBI Papers, Atlanta Child Murders.

witnesses. The defense lacked the funds to do so. During the trial, that lasted two months, prosecutors focused on four areas:

1. The character and credibility of Wayne Williams
2. What happened on Jackson parkway
3. Eyewitnesses to Wayne Williams' behavior and alleged interaction with victims
4. The physical evidence, which was primarily based on fibers, hairs and bloodstains found on victims that matched elements in Williams' environment.³²⁰

These areas gave way to success for the prosecution. On Saturday, February 27, 1981, the jury convicted Wayne Bertram Williams of murder of Jimmy Ray Payne and Nathaniel Cater after 11 hours of deliberation. Judge Clarence Cooper then sentenced Williams to two life sentences to be served consecutively and eligible for parole in seven years.³²¹

Upon the sentencing, Atlanta's black officials disconnected from the case showed support for the verdict. The newly installed Mayor Andrew Young said the verdict "represented our jury system. They heard the evidence and saw the charts and under our system they convicted him." Veteran civil rights activist and then-elected to Atlanta's City Council John Lewis stated that he was glad this case was over and expressed confidence in the jury system. Lewis Slaton felt the jury had the evidence and approved the verdict. Other city councilmen expressed similar approval. State and federal investigators purportedly pieced together enough information to conclude that Williams was responsible for all but two of the series in the Atlanta youth killings. Investigators linked Williams to 10 victims through circumstantial evidence such as fibers, bloodstains and witnesses. According to FBI records, the total of 12 deaths mentioned during the trial, the fibers found on the bodies of 10 more victims matched fibers found on at least six

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ "Wayne Williams Is Convicted," *Atlanta Daily World*, 2 March 1982.

items from Williams' house and car. In all, FBI records established fiber links between Williams and 22 slaying victims.³²²

With Williams found guilty, the Atlanta Police disbanded the Atlanta Police task force. This conjured negative outbursts from Atlanta's black community who contested the verdict. Many remained convinced that the murders were unsolved. Camille Bell exclaimed "Judge Cooper [was] part of the prosecution." Joseph Lowery stated "I don't think you will find anyone in the black community who believes Wayne Williams committed all those murders alone. We feel there should be some continuing, cooperative effort with the federal agencies." Rev. Joseph Boone, director of the Metropolitan Atlanta Summit Leadership Congress openly attacked the closing of the books on the two murders and explained that many mothers in black areas of the city were still afraid that a killer was on the loose.³²³ Again, there was a growing suspicion amongst those preyed upon by the serial killer(s) that the jury found the wrong man guilty.

Another aspect in Fulton County's failure to prove Williams' guilt was the fact that the police set the parameters as to what homicides around the city fit in to the missing and murdered youth category. The list became somewhat controversial because the standard by which cases were added to the list was compromised by botched police work and negligence by authorities that resulted in murders categorized incorrectly. Investigator Chet Dettlinger asserted that many of the cases that should have been added to list did not for this very reason. According to Dettlinger, the total number of murders with consistent patterns was 64, as compared to the thirty set by Atlanta police. Dettlinger's list included eighteen female victims and twenty-six victims over the age of 20 years-old as opposed to the FBI's two female victims and 6 victims over the

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid; see also, Mark Mayfield, "Wayne Williams Reshaping His Defense Team for Making Appeal," *Atlanta Daily World*, 4 March 1982.

age of 20 years. Most notable was the fact many of the homicides were omitted from the list because they did not meet the ever changing parameters. With this, it was noted that after Wayne Williams' was taken into to custody, more than 20 people were murdered. These victims were never added to the list because the police quit counting after Williams' arrest.³²⁴ This further shows failure to prove Williams' guilt of all thirty of the murders.

To prove this, there were at least seven unsolved murders of black women starting in January 1982, while Williams was imprisoned. Once again, Atlanta's black community called on black leaders and other civic organizations to pressure police to step up investigations of the slayings. Consequently, the city renewed its curfew ordinance for children under the age of 14 for the summer months. The police considered establishing a new special task force to investigate these murders. George Napper, who acted as Public Safety Commissioner since the departure of Lee P. Brown, announced that a "major offender squad" would investigate in to the slaying of the women.³²⁵ The continuing murders were taken as evidence that there was probably more than one serial killer operating in Atlanta.

From the time that Williams was convicted, black Atlantans, skeptical of his guilt asserted that the government had manufactured the evidence to close the case. Throughout the Atlanta youth murders, there was widespread fear within in the black community that the Ku Klux Klan in cahoots with the CIA and FBI were hunting and killing black children. A police informant had knowledge that Klan members were trying to begin a race war by killing black children.³²⁶ For a group with a history of murdering black children with no remorse this was not

³²⁴ Chet Dettlinger and Jeff Prugh, *The List*, (Atlanta: Phimay Enterprises, Inc, 1983).

³²⁵ Vincent McCraw, "Black Atlanta's Concerns Confirmed by Police Action," *Atlanta Daily World*, 21 May 1982.

³²⁶ FBI Papers, Atlanta Child Murders.

far fetched. However, through interviews for the project, it was asserted that the Ku Klux Klan was attempting to get back at Maynard Jackson because of the airport. Other rumors concluded that multiple killers were at work during the murders. There was evidence of homosexual activity by some of the male victims to earn money. One of the most interesting theories presented was that the Atlanta Police were killing the children. There were numerous testimonies that some of the missing boys had gotten into a police car.³²⁷ It was this kind of information and disinformation that worked against Wayne Williams. The fact that Williams illegally installed police lights on his car can be seen as attractive to young boys. With this, the lights were seen as a tool to lure to boys to the car or to appear as having police authority.

As the thirty-one month saga formally known as the missing and murdered youth of Atlanta left the city crippled, Atlanta's black communities responded with safety education programs along with neighborhood patrols. The armed vigilante groups as seen through the Bat Patrol carried firearms as the patrolled Techwood Homes until the police arrested five members of the posse. Volunteer search patrols navigated remote areas looking for the bodies of missing children. By April of 1981, the Task Force established by Public Safety commissioner Lee P. Brown, numbered forty investigators. At a headquarters located at a renovated car dealership showroom on West Peachtree in downtown Atlanta, Maynard Jackson and Commissioner Brown were kept abreast with the most sophisticated and advanced computer system. There were dozens of phone workers who took hundreds of tips a day, feeding information into a pair of IBM 3031 computers. Psychics and profilers were called in to help with the investigation. Helicopter patrols were commissioned for surveillance in areas where kidnapping were likely to take place. Computerized telephone messages dialed to 150,000 homes asked residents for any relevant information. The cost of this hi-tech operation was \$230,000 a month, which prompted Jackson

³²⁷ Trashinda Wright, interview by Maurice J. Hobson, Atlanta, GA, 26 October 2007.

to appeal President Ronald Reagan for aid. In his response, Reagan loosed \$1.5 million in federal funds. Atlanta's business community also contributed services such as transportation and communications. Though no white children fell victim to the killers, Atlanta's white citizens put up a \$100,000 in reward money for information that lead to arrests. On a national scale, people wore green, black, and red ribbons, colors from the Black Power movement of the 1960s, to demonstrate their support for the families of the slain youth.

Undoubtedly the episode known as the Atlanta missing and murdered youth presented Atlanta in a different light. It besmirched the name of a city that had poised itself as a beacon on the hill while the rest of the South sweltered in the hellish heat of American racism. It forced Georgians, the rest of the South and America to reexamine a history marked by white terror as seen in Klan violence and lynching. It quelled the belief of forward thinking and progress seen in the political gains acquired through black electoral politics and black political empowerment. Most importantly, it forced the nation and the world to question Atlanta's notoriety as the new and highly touted black Mecca, a land that represented the highest educational, political and economic aspirations for black Americans. It forced people in general to grapple with the fact that the city also housed some of the roughest and most destitute conditions for blacks in the South and the nation. Yet, in an attempt to once again transform itself international city of business progress and racial tolerance, the city moved forward with the election of Mayor Andrew Young.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BRAVADO OF BLACK ATLANTA: ANDREW YOUNG, NEOLIBERALISM AND A BOISTEROUS BLACK NEW SOUTH MECCA

*Oh you know what else they tryin to do....make a curfew especially for me and you. The traces of the New World Order. Time is getting shorter. If we don't get prepared people it's gone be a slaughter. My mind won't allow me to not be curious. My folk don't understand so they don't take it serious. But every now and then, I wonder if the gate was put up to keep crime out or to keep our ass in!*³²⁸

In 1974, a white senator from Mississippi introduced Andrew Jackson Young as a congressman from Georgia's Fifth District at the presidential prayer breakfast. Just twenty years prior, he had been a lieutenant for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Montgomery, Alabama. Young recognized that before the *Brown v Board of Topeka Kansas* decision and voting, blacks could not exercise their right to vote in the South due to various forms of racism, including the infamous literacy tests used to disfranchise many literate Blacks while allowing many illiterate whites to vote.. An example of this prejudice can be seen through the literacy test given to his younger brother upon his return to the South from the Navy. According to Young, his younger brother who was also a graduate of Harvard University's dental school and had passed the Louisiana state dental exam was denied the right to register because he was told by white court officials, that he'd failed the literacy test. This was the kind of racist society into which Young was born and bred.³²⁹

³²⁸ Goodie Mob, "Cell Therapy," *Soul Food LP*, 1995.

³²⁹ Oral Interview with Andrew Young by Walter Devries and Jack Bass, 31 January 1974, Interview A-0080, Southern Oral History Program Collection, Manuscripts Department, Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill North Carolina.

Young had been baptized by the Civil Rights movement as a lieutenant and close confidant of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He was born on March 12, 1932 in New Orleans, Louisiana to a prosperous middle-class family. Young graduated from Howard University in Washington, DC in 1951 and later earned a divinity degree from Hartford Theological Seminary in Connecticut. Upon graduation, he accepted the pastorate of Bethany Congregational Church in Thomasville, Georgia, a job that helped him immerse himself in civil rights and in organizing voter registration drives. In 1961, young left his position as pastor to work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the church based civil rights organization led by Dr. King. Young worked with the SCLC by organizing “citizenship schools,” workshops that taught nonviolent organizing strategies to local people who possessed leadership qualities. The schools served rural, mostly uneducated blacks that were annoyed by Young’s light complexion and middle-class persona and high-brow attitude, from which many considered him an elitist.³³⁰

Young’s organizing of voter registration drives were met with fears that the black community would suffer at the hands of violence as a result of white recalcitrance and various forms of white terror. Around 1948, a black man in Thomasville tried to register to vote and was lassoed on the courthouse steps, tied to the back of a pickup truck and dragged throughout the black community until he was dead, then cut loose in front of the jail. This act asserted the violence and terror bestowed upon blacks by hateful whites throughout America in general and the South in particular. Nevertheless, when Young moved to the city and organized a voter registration drive, there was quite a northern presence, which put the spotlight on Thomasville and quieted white violence, allowing blacks to be registered to vote. Some examples of this northern presence were the fact that President Dwight Eisenhower went on quail hunting

³³⁰ Ibid.

excursions in Thomasville and former Secretary of Treasurer Hubert Humphrey owned a plantation in the town. However, in organizing the voter registration drives, Young called upon John Wesley Dobbs, the grandfather of Maynard Jackson, founder of the Atlanta Negro Voters League, and key component in the Primus King case, which struck down the all white primary in Georgia. Dobbs' influence with the Prince Hall Masonic Order allowed for voter registration drives at Masonic lodges all around the state, particular in Georgia's bigger cities. Simultaneously, Georgia Governor Ellis Arnold's moderate stance triggered a vote among the youth. These things together moved Atlanta ahead in moderate politics in regards to race.³³¹

Another contributing factor was the appointment of relatively liberal Republican justices in Southern states by the Eisenhower administration. They were not tied to the old southern Democratic machine, which assured some of the best-trained and brightest lawyers in the South, quite often, moving into judgeships. In Atlanta, there were blacks on the Republican state committee that were approving and recommending judges. Oftentimes, they appointed judges that were not a part of the old southern and racist oligarchy. Some of the Judges that fit in to this category were Judge Elbert Tuttle of the Fifth District; Judge John Minor Wisdom, also of the Fifth District; U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and later the Eleventh Circuit Judge Frank Minis Johnson of Alabama; J. Skelly Wright of New Orleans who was a judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia and a staunch anti-segregationists; and U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and later the Eleventh Circuit Judge Bryan Simpson. This group was the basis of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which spanned from Savannah,

³³¹ Oral Interview with Andrew Young by Walter Devries and Jack Bass, 31 January 1974, Interview A-0080, Southern Oral History Program Collection, Manuscripts Department, Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill North Carolina; See also Marvin L. Arrowsmith, "Ike Gets 10 Quail Hunting in Georgia," *Ludington Daily News*, 13 February 1954; and John Sayle Watterson, *The Games the Presidents Play*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 191.

Georgia to El Paso, Texas and was arguably the most liberal wing of the judiciary in America before the Civil Rights movement. This group of liberal republican judges allowed for black civil gains on two fronts; first they were some of the most independent jurists available and they were constantly under pressure to make decisions on civil rights cases.³³²

As other events for black freedom along with the Montgomery Bus Boycott awoke the black masses, Young viewed the National Voting Rights Act of 1965 as the watershed moment where social change prevailed. Though the Civil Rights Act of 1964 changed traditions and customs, it did little to challenge the political power relationships in the South. In this regard, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was far less consequential than the passage of the 1965 act that gave blacks access to political power. In Atlanta, black voter efficiency by elites, middle and working class blacks was pertinent to black political gains seen in the 1960s. Though Atlanta had a highly developed black community with black institutions of higher learning, a black intellectual community, a half dozen black millionaires, Citizens Trust Bank of Atlanta, and the might of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, the black community was being denied political opportunities prior to the 1960s. As black politicians became agents of change throughout Atlanta and the state of Georgia, a need for voter registration workers became prevalent. Most of the deputy registrars came from outside states. Companies and organizations such as Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Citizens Trust Bank of Atlanta, and the American Teachers' Association* provided manpower as deputy registrars. Other strategies used to push voter registration drive included volunteering activity.³³³

³³² Ibid; See also David A. Nichols, *A Matter of Justice: Eisenhower and the Beginning of the Civil Rights Revolution*, (New York: Simon & Schuster), 2007.

³³³ Ibid.

Andrew Young: Towards a Black New South

Andrew Young attributed change in part to organic relationships between blacks and whites. According to Young, “a lot of [white] people in leadership positions had been cared for by black women, where there was not just a servant relationship, but where it was somebody that worked with the family through long tears, and they were probably more mother to the people than their own parents were. You had a complicated set of personal relationships in the white community in the South that made southern whites very, very guilty about the racial situation.”

To Young, the watershed moments in leaning towards a black New South were the deaths of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy. Young stated:

“It was almost as though, I sensed that whites wanted to help, but didn’t know how. Of course, that was also the period that blacks began to express their hostility. It was even more difficulty. But in spite of all that, the tremendous white turnout for the Poor People’s campaign, we could have not brought poor people to Washington, had not we had help from white southerners in just about every city and that was right straight on though Atlanta. The Roman Catholic Archbishop in Savannah and in Charleston provided them with food and shelter. There were not resources in the black community alone and with the slightest invitation; the white community in the South was ready to move toward new relationships with blacks. The news media were not publicizing people like me. They were publicizing folks that were saying, “Burn.” John Lewis was around; talking non-violence back then, but nobody was listening to John. It was the Black Panther types, you know, the rhetorical revolutionaries that had the mass media. And that’s the impression most whites had of blacks. At the same time, [politicians like] Richard Nixon and Lester Maddox were playing to the fears of this same white southerner in white America. Nobody was giving them a vehicle to get out of their racist heritage. I think when black politicians came along, and one of the reasons I ran was that it seemed to me that if I could win in 1970, it would put an end to the Nixon southern strategy. I saw that southern strategy as really damaging everything that I had been working for and instead of a New South, you’d get the old Dixiecrat South in Republican dress, coming backs to the South.”³³⁴

³³⁴ Ibid.

Young's credit to white southerners may be somewhat gratuitous yet it does speak to the fact that the Old South order of white supremacy ended with the help of some moderate whites from all over the United States, including the South.

In 1972, after King's assassination, Young won Georgia's Fifth district seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He, along with Barbara Jordan, a Texas Democrat, became the first black southerners since Reconstruction to be elected to Congress from the South. Young's success was attributed to the many voter registration campaigns he had organized throughout the South in the 1950s and 1960s and eventually elected thousands of blacks to higher office in the coming decades. While in Congress, Young championed on behalf of the poor and working-class Americans. He was later rewarded for his labor by being appointed ambassador to the United Nations (UN) by President Jimmy Carter in 1977. As UN ambassador, Young helped to change the foundation of foreign policy, making human rights a central focus and arguing that economic development in the Third World, particularly in Africa, was in the best interest of the United States. Young was one of the initial diplomats to call for sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa, while simultaneously calling for the U.S. to recognize Communist Vietnam. He was forced to resign his position in 1979 for having met with a representative of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which at that time was considered a terrorist organization.³³⁵

As a congressman for the Fifth District of Georgia, all evidence indicated that Young identified more with the Georgia Caucus and the Democratic study Group than he did with the Congressional Black Caucus. In doing this, Young kept open relationships with arch-Republican conservatives to better know and understand how they would vote. He effectively utilized his bi-partisan relationship to get swing votes. To some, his open relationship with arch-Republicans

³³⁵ *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, Georgia Humanities Council and the University of Georgia Press, 2007.

proved him to be a shrewd politician, but to other, he was considered a flip-flopper that fraternized with the enemy. However, because the Voting Rights Act of 1965 redrew district lines and new district lines almost gerrymandered black politicians such as Young and Maynard Jackson out of Atlanta's black community to an overwhelming white district, Young understood the increasing need to appeal to moderate and swing voters.³³⁶

The Coca-Cola Company, an international business that called Atlanta home, helped give Atlanta an uniquely cosmopolitan swagger. It was at the behest of Robert Winship Woodruff, President of Coca-Cola that Atlanta slowly and peacefully integrated and eventually endorsed black political candidates. When Ivan Allen became the Chairman of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce after his terms as mayor, though he did not support Maynard Jackson for mayor, he did support Young for Congress. Allen's endorsement of Young for congress and later as mayor brought significant support from the business community and millions of dollars. Young concluded that Allen and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce did not really support him, but more importantly, they did not support his opponent.³³⁷

During his tenure in politics, Andrew Young presented a different kind of politician, spanning two constituencies that elected him to two different public offices. In his bid for Congress in 1972, Young's constituency was, by and large, a combination of Atlanta's black old guard coalition and the white business elite. However, because of Maynard Jackson's success at creating a new black constituency, Young utilized a new coalition of blacks, as well as the white business elite. According to Young, one difference between the new coalition and the old

³³⁶ Oral Interview with Andrew Young by Walter Devries and Jack Bass, 31 January 1974, Interview A-0080, Southern Oral History Program Collection, Manuscripts Department, Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill North Carolina.

³³⁷ Ibid.

coalition is that there were both black and white businessmen that came to meetings with black politicians, as opposed to only white businessmen in prior years.

Under the leadership of Andrew Young, Atlanta continued to exercise its black political might. His election in 1981 signaled the solidification of the black political power that he had helped to create in Georgia. What was historic about Young's feat is that oftentimes after the end of a "first" black elected official's tenure, power often shifts back to a white majority. However, in Atlanta and for the first time, Maynard Jackson was succeeded by another African American. Young's tenure included two terms as mayor. His terms as mayor marked a change for the city in business and economic development, urban renewal and gentrification as some would argue, at the social cost of the poor, especially the Black poor.

Andrew Young assumed power as mayor of Atlanta in 1982, under extremely favorable circumstances. His predecessor left him debt-free, a major deed for city governments. He had been convinced to run for mayor by Coretta Scott King and Susie LaBord, the President of the Grady Homes Housing Project Tenant Association. According to Young, Atlanta's black coalition scoured the city to find someone that was an electable candidate for mayor. There was much talk that Atlanta needed to go with a white mayor because there was a great misunderstanding in the business community at the time as to why business was leaving the city. The widely believed cause was that many in the business community deemed Maynard Jackson as anti-business. Also, the business community was leaving because of a black mayor. In an attempt to bring Young to the table, Maynard Jackson invited him to a meeting to talk about the direction of City Hall following the end of his two terms. In an aggressive approach Susie LaBord pushed for Young's candidacy, when she told him, "Andy, remember when you came here you weren't nothing. We made you somebody and we sent you to congress and we sent you

to the United Nations and if you haven't learned to help us. Boy....we got too much invested in you to let you go out of the pasture! So we gon' have to make you run for mayor. If, with all you know, you can't run the city, there's no hope. You've got to run for mayor."³³⁸ To Young, Susie Labord was a woman of moral authority whose leadership had worked in all of his campaigns along with Martin Luther King, Sr. [Daddy King]. She was also someone that he respected and did not question, as Young openly admitted to questioning the judgments of and arguing with Daddy King or Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, the longtime president of Morehouse College and mentor to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Some of Young's good friends in the business community told Young, "We know that you would make a good mayor. You've got all of the talent and ability. But we just wish you were white."³³⁹ This criticism of Jackson was due to his revitalization of black neighborhood and historic landmarks, notwithstanding the fact that he completed the new airport and opened the city rapid transit system, done on the insistence of affirmative action in employment and in city contracts and micromanagement of decision making for the city.

Deeming himself a public person, Young accepted the challenge claiming, "There's nothing more exciting than America's cities." The mayoral campaign of 1981 was brutal and the election was tainted with racial overtones with young winning 55 percent of the vote. With tensions centered on the issue of race, it became clear that whatever skills Young had as a

³³⁸ Gary Pomerantz, Interview with Andrew Young, 24 July 1995, Gary Pomerantz Collection, EU, MARBL; William Womack, Interview With Andrew Young, Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasters Oral History Interviews, Auburn Avenue Research Library, Atlanta, Georgia.

³³⁹ Ibid.

diplomat was useful in curtailing racial divisions and other dilemmas that he would face including a massive budget deficit, widespread poverty, a rising crime rate and white flight.³⁴⁰

Some naysayers doubted Young's ability to grapple with Atlanta's problems. He was seen as anti-business and a weak administrator. However, Young quickly proved his critics wrong. Young won the mayoral election in 1981 with only ten percent of the white vote in the runoff election. However, he won with overwhelming numbers in black precincts. After assuming office, Young showed himself able to work closely with the white business elite, promoting economic development. This in turn won him the support of the white business elite and the white press and immediately avoided the problems faced by his predecessor Maynard Jackson, whose administration was perceived as anti-business. By 1984, the city was extremely successful in attracting new businesses and experienced substantial growth and development. By 1988, a survey of 385 executives concluded that Atlanta was their first choice to locate a business. Though blacks reigned over the city's politics and whites controlled the economy, Young found his niche by serving as a liaison to ensure "that whites get some of the power and blacks get some of the money." However, Alton Hornsby notes that the overwhelming sentiment of Young within the black community was that he catered to the white business elite and neglected poor blacks, while simultaneously gaining support for Atlanta's growing black middle class.³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ Gary Pomerantz, Interview with Andrew Young, 19 May 1992, Gary Pomerantz Collection, EU, MARBL; New Republic, 23 September 1981; and *U.S. News & World Report*, 9 November 1981.

³⁴¹ Alton Hornsby, "Andrew Jackson Young: Mayor of Atlanta, 1982-1990," *The Journal of African American History* 77, no. 3 (1992): 160; *Atlanta Constitution*, 28 October 1983; Charles J. King, Jr., "Unlike Jackson's, Young's Style Invites Challenge," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 7 October 1984; 20 February 1983; *New York Times*, 21 October 1973; Robert E. Johnson, "Andy Young's Bold Plans," *Jet* (3 December 1981), 13; *Ebony*, August 1984; *U.S. News & World Report*, 25 July 1988; and Art Harris, *Esquire*, June 1985.

By the mid 1980s, Atlanta encompassed an eighteen county metropolitan area. According to Hornsby, to the north of Fulton County, Cobb and Gwinnett counties were among the nation's fastest growing area with big economic promise as evidenced in the nation's most lucrative high end car dealerships. Also, the Cable News Network (CNN) founded by Ted Turner drew attention to Atlanta. Hornsby notes that though the City boomed, the greatest nemesis during Young's tenure was public safety. Atlanta remained at the top or near the top of the list for all major American cities in the category of violent crimes. Incidence of forcible rape in the city averaged 157 per 100,000 population per year, five times the national average. Aggravated assault averaged 1,573 per 100,000 population; robbery 1,099 per 100,000; and murders eight per 100,000. Much of this was the result of the distribution and selling of crack cocaine, a cheap street drug that target the poor.³⁴²

Crack Cocaine

"Drugs and black oppression have been inextricably linked since the first African slaves were brought to the New World to harvest sugar cane, in a three-sided trade system that ultimately delivered rum—the hot new drug of its day—into the mouths of Europe's poor. But no amount of precedent, it seems, has adequately prepared black America or its leaders for the thundershock of crack."³⁴³

The repercussions of crack cocaine drew new boundaries lines on old issues. Crack cocaine disproportionately affected black communities and was deemed as the greatest concern that threatened black progress. In a poll conducted by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* of 12

³⁴² Hornsby, 161; Olav H. Alvig to Editor, *Atlanta Constitution*, 3 June 1988; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 8 May 1988; *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 February 1983, 15 October 1985; State of the City Address, 3 January 1989, 24-26.

³⁴³ Tom Baxter, "How Crack Recast Black Politics: New Lines Forming Over Drug Epidemic as Middle Class Sees Devastation of Poor," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Sunday, 30 April 1989.

southern states in April of 1989, it was concluded that drugs were perceived as the country's biggest problem and that blacks were more concerned about drugs than any other group. The influx of crack cocaine in the black community represented, in a brutal way, the paradox of the Reagan years for poorer communities of color. While drug use in middle class American purportedly waned, crack came from hinterland and devastated the poorest communities. Simultaneously, middle class blacks purportedly benefited from these years, even as poor blacks fell farther behind. The political responses to crack ranged from the radical perspective of Louis Farrakhan who regarded crack's sudden emergence as evidence of a genocidal plot, to black conservatives such as Robert Woodson who argued that crack represents the failure of the social welfare programs that were designed to "uplift" poor blacks.³⁴⁴

With crack cocaine, black politicians found themselves in a quagmire muddled by a long history of oppression that was not easily discussed for fear that it may put black folk and black culture in an unfavorable light. Peter Bell, the executive director of the Institute of Black Chemical Abuse, stated, "Black leadership is truly on the horns of a dilemma in terms of recognizing the need to deal with the drug problem, but fearing that by doing so it could contribute to the stigmatization of the black community." With this sentiment, what is clear is that crack cocaine, in some ways, can be seen as a new marker for black class identity as this identity is often embodied by the black middle and upper classes.³⁴⁵

In fiscal year 1981, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) interdicted 1,937 kilos (4,270.3 lbs.) of cocaine. By fiscal 1988, following a period when numerous surveys showed a steady decline in middle-class drug use, the DEA interdicted 55,896 kilos of crack (123,229.59

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

lbs.). The Cocaine hotline, a toll-free telephone counseling service for cocaine users reported that 52 percent of callers made more than \$25,000 a year; by 1987 that percentage had dropped to 20 percent. During this same period, the percentage of callers employed dropped from 84 percent to 46 percent. The percentage of college-educated users dropped from 50 percent to 16 percent. And these figures were from a source in which poor blacks were likely underrepresented.³⁴⁶ What should be considered is that the shifts in population provide room for statistical error. With a continuing drug habit, drug users that began calling in 1983 may be the same drug users calling in 1987. This means that the shift in populations may not be a shift, but the changing conditions for constant callers who lost their job as a result of their drug abuse.

Black communities were divided over the large-scale sweeps through housing projects, in which there were an unprecedented amount of reports of mistaken arrests and police brutality. Around the issue of civil liberties, questions surrounded the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development policy of evicting whole families from public housing if one member of the family was a drug dealer. However, as seen by “corner boys,” young men that loiter to make drug transactions, crack dealers took care of the young people, primarily boys, that worked for them by feeding them and making sure that their families had money. More important, in the streets even small children called the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] the Cocaine Importing Agency.³⁴⁷ What can be gleaned from this is the sentiment felt by poor blacks that the U.S. government trafficked cocaine into urban black communities.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Gary Webb, *Dark Alliance: The CIA and the Crack Cocaine Explosion*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999).

On a wide scale level, the increase in arrests of lower level dealers increased the nation's jails and prisons, which activists long pointed out, were disproportionately imbalanced along racial lines. Also, there was increasing concern for innocent residents of poor areas virtually vulnerable to violence as a result of crack. But, the common thread between the two was that political establishment, historically white, had failed to prevent the crack problem and lacked both the will and insight to combat it. What was clear was that blacks, conservative or liberal, radical or mainstream, began to express their convictions by taking matters into their own hands. This proved to be an interesting and uncertain moment in black and urban experiences.³⁴⁹

As Young took office, the effects of Reaganomics gripped the U.S. and as a result, Ronald Reagan was taking money away from the city. In 1983, Atlanta received approximately \$49 million from the federal government in funds. By the time Young left office, the city received \$9 million, cutting all federal funding by \$40 million. Mayors Ivan Allen, Sam Massell and Maynard Jackson went back and forth to Washington to receive money for different developments in the city, but during Young's tenure, the funds desiccated and could not be replaced in Washington. As a result, Young turned to his "citizen of the world" approach and courted the private sector and international investor to Atlanta. Some of the grievances by Young's constituency included feelings of neglect in the areas public safety; public housing; transportation; minority business development; urban renewal and gentrification; and affirmative action.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

Public Safety

On August 13, 1985, Eddie Kirkland died in Grady Memorial Hospital some 16 hours after his arrest at the Perry Homes housing project by Atlanta police officers. Initially, it seemed like an old story where an alcohol or substance abuser became violent. The police subdued him and he died. But there were whispers of what seemed to be an instance of police brutality. Police brutality in Atlanta was an all too often occurrence and Kirkland's death, purportedly at the hand of police, rallied citizens to meet city officials with much unrest and criticism. In an attempt to calm the Perry Homes' crowd, Mayor Andrew Young held two meetings with residents to assure the angry mob that the mysterious death of Eddie Kirkland was being thoroughly investigated and that "justice would prevail." Young's first meeting, a closed-door session with officers of the Perry Homes Tenant Association, lasted about 90 minutes. Afterwards, he spoke to about 75 residents for 30 minutes, asking their patience until the investigations of the incident were completed by the Atlanta Police Bureau's internal affairs office, the U.S. Justice Department, and the city's Civilian Review Board, a panel appointed by Young to look into allegations of police brutality.³⁵⁰

As Young promised suspension and prosecution of officers if it were found that there was excessive use of force that caused Kirkland's death, several people in the crowd booed and hissed and called for immediate prosecution of the officers involved. The sentiment amongst the crowd was that police officers had no right to be judge and jury on the scene. They felt that the police had killed a man by beating him to death. Yet, on the other side, Atlanta police had been responding to an unprecedented amount of violence in the community. The crowd, however, felt

³⁵⁰ Howard Pousner, "Young, Residents Discuss Death of Arrested Man," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 20 August 1985.

that Young had attained office and had forgotten about poor people. To the Perry Homes crowd, it had been too long of an investigation without any explanation or results. In a mailgram sent by Rev. Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the leader urged Young to speed up the investigations so that the community might know the facts within the next two or three days. In the summer of 1985, Kirkland and three others had been shot by Atlanta police and “immediate investigation” was demanded and not “routine procedure.”³⁵¹

The Kirkland incident provides a window into the lives experienced by some black Atlantans that lived in the Atlanta Housing Authority’s projects. Robert Scheer, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times, found Perry Homes to be a sprawling housing project and a desolated ghetto. He wrote, “At dusk, the endless young of Perry Homes become a milling throng, a disco dance without music or lights, degenerating frequently into hassling and knife fights, while most of the residents hide behind locked doors hearing bad sound and fearing the worst.” Scheer’s portrait of Atlanta as a black city “floats in a sea of white suburbia whose inhabitants desperately avoid contact with the untouchables” was heavily criticized and even ridiculed; however, when Scheer set out to find Perry Homes while riding with John Lewis and Julian Bond, they could not find it after spending an hour driving.³⁵² This example illustrates the opinion towards city officials held by Perry Homes’ residents as well as others amongst Atlanta’s black poor.

The citizens of Perry Homes were unhappy with Public Safety Commissioner George Napper’s swift opinion that police used no excessive force. The difference in opinion held between City Hall and Perry Homes residents was viewed by the latter as being afraid to come to Perry Homes to combat the issues of poor people who had put Young in office. Perry Homes’

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Frederick Allen, “Traces of Hope at Perry Homes,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 20 August 1985.

citizens expressed their desire for police to patrol their housing projects and felt that if charges of police brutality continued, then police would stop patrolling altogether. Perry Homes was not a slum, but a community of mostly law abiding citizens that had more than its share of frustrations.³⁵³

Though the death of Eddie Kirkland riled a segment of Atlanta's black poor, an autopsy report showed that Kirkland died as a result of a cocaine overdose rather than police brutality. It was widely believed that Kirkland swallowed a bag of crack cocaine, a practice used by drug dealers and users to hide evidence of the possession of a controlled substance from police. Purportedly, the bag of crack cocaine burst in Kirkland's stomach causing a drug overdose. From City Hall's perspective, these result cleared Atlanta's police of all wrong doing. But this did not unravel the long history of police brutality endured by Atlanta's black poor and as a result the issue of whether Atlanta police used excessive force remained unresolved. To its credit, Andrew Young and the Atlanta Police Bureau set up a special task force probing not only the Kirkland Case, but three other cases in which citizens died as a result of confrontations with the police in a three month period. All of these cases went before the Civilian Review Board. The Board was chaired by Rev. P.C. Ennis, pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church and Rev. McKinley Young, pastor of Big Bethel A.M.E. Church. Other members ranged from the wife of a retired motorcycle officer to Buren Batson, a gay rights activist. Investigations took months. Members reviewed police records, interviewed witnesses, visited crime scenes and watched re-enactments by the officers themselves. This was a useful and necessary process, not only to calm community fears about what was perceived as the appearance of eagerness by police to resort to deadly force, but also to help the Police Bureau discover and correct any short comings in

³⁵³ Ibid.

training, operating procedures or attitudinal approaches.³⁵⁴ Yet often, after receiving the Civilian Review Board report, Young and other city leaders proceeded without considering the Board's decision. This practice hurt Young's credibility amongst Atlanta's blacks.

The crack cocaine epidemic of the 1980s contributed to the economic recession faced by the United States in the 1980s. Subsequently, an influx in illegal drug dependency, homelessness, murder, burglary, armed robbery and imprisonment took precedence, particularly in lower income communities of color. In the Atlanta Metropolitan area, the city had swelled to 3.3 million people where 736,000 were black. The City's core had a population of 264,000 of which 67 percent were black.³⁵⁵ Within the black community, a large black population gave way to a large homeless and poor population where the effects of the crack cocaine epidemic were evident. The flooding of crack cocaine in lower income communities warranted the necessity for calculated steps. By the end of 1988, Atlanta jails were bursting at their seams with recidivists drug offenders whose cases of possession with the intent to distribute resulted in probation. State law required that the sentence in such cases be from five to thirty years in prison. In the first nine months of 1988 alone, Atlanta police arrested 171 offenders younger than seventeen years of age, almost three times as many as during the same period in 1986.³⁵⁶

As a measure to combat crime and attacks on police that resulted in injury or death, Public Safety Commissioner Napper pushed to arm Atlanta police with hollow-point bullets. Hollow-point bullets were banned in 1973 by then-Public Safety Commissioner Reginald Eaves after a rash of police shootings drew charges of brutality, particularly from the black community.

³⁵⁴ Chet Fuller, "Police Look Inward for Answers," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 27 August 1985; According to this article, the four men killed in the summer of 1985 were 16 year-old David Samples, Roderick Cousins, Darnell Arnold and Eddie Kirkland.

³⁵⁵ U.S Census, 1990.

³⁵⁶ Chet Fuller, "Police Look Inward for Answers," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 27 August 1985.

Records indicated that in 1973, when the hollow-points were banned, 19 people were killed by police. Since then, police shootings had dropped dramatically, to only four in 1986. Some of Atlanta's law makers felt that hollow-point ammunition promoted violence while others felt that the more lethal-hollow-points were inhumane and caused severe internal injuries to shooting victims. However, in his March 1987 attempt to persuade local law makers that hollow-point bullets were needed, Napper obtained local experts to endorse the lethal ammunitions. Proponents contended that hollow-point bullets were better designed for use in densely populated areas. Ballistic studies showed that semi-wadcutters'—bullets used by police as opposed to hollow-points—potentially penetrated victims and ricocheted causing harm to innocent bystanders. It was also noted that law enforcement officers in all of the surrounding Atlanta metro-counties, including DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, Fulton and Clayton used hollow points. As a result, Napper used Randy Hanzlick, the associate medical examiner of Fulton County, to cite the shooting death of Clarence Smith by police after he fatally wounded Sergeant Willie Cameron at the crowded West End Mall.³⁵⁷

As Napper pushed for the use of hollow-points, community representatives spoke out against his proposal stating it would produce a rash of police shootings and “Start an arms race in Atlanta.” Ethel Matthews, president of the Welfare Rights Organization, asserted that poor blacks and whites would be the likely victims of overzealous police if hollow-points were reissued. Former federal penitentiary warden John O. Boone told the committee that the push for hollow-points was a reflection of misplaced priorities by city officials. He warned that if police carried heavier artillery, that would-be criminals would respond in kind. Proponents of hollow-points such as Hanzlick noted a study of police shooting cases in Atlanta and found that 57

³⁵⁷ Nathan McCall, “Napper Renews Push for Police to Use Hollow-Point Bullets,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 13 March 1987.

percent of the semi-wadcutters used exited the victims' bodies. A small sampling of people shot with hollow-point bullets showed that they exited 25 percent of the time. Police officer Faye Coffield told the committee that police-community relations had improved since Eaves banned hollow-points, characterizing semi-wadcutters as "soft" and citing the Cameron shooting at West End Mall. Police had to shoot Cameron's assailant Clarence Smith several times to stop him. Several of the bullets exited the man's body, an investigation revealed. Councilman Thomas Cuffie, a former police officer and chairman of the Public Safety Committee argued that the bullets were needed to help the police battle a rising tide of crime in Atlanta.³⁵⁸ To Napper and Hanzlick, using hollow point bullets were an issue of police safety.

Most black Atlantans believed that illegal drugs were the number one problem faced by the city, but many believed that street police mistreated people in their communities. Interviews with 1,019 registered voters were conducted between the dates April 10-25 of 1988 to compile a poll conducted by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. About 66 percent of the correspondents were black and about 30 percent white. The poll found that 51 percent of Atlanta blacks across all education and economic levels thought that drugs were the major problem far above other issues such as crime, employment, education, housing and the homeless. Among Atlanta's white community, crime and drugs ranked together at the top of the list. Nineteen percent mentioned crime and 17 percent mentioned drugs as the worst problem of the city. More than whites, 66 percent of black Atlantans believed that crime in Atlanta had risen sharply since 1986, which was in direct correlation with drugs as opposed to 49 percent of whites. Crime actually did increase significantly between 1986 and 1988. In 1987, crime in the seven major categories of homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault burglary, larceny and auto theft had increased 18.4

³⁵⁸ Nathan McCall, "Switching Bullets would Start 'Arms Race,' Foes Claim-Council Committee holds Hearing on Napper's Hollow-point Proposal," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 31 March 1987.

percent since 1985. Rape was the only major crime that decreased during that period, from 683 reported cases in 1985 to 636 in 1987.³⁵⁹

This poll by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* revealed significant differences between blacks and whites in the way they felt police officers treated people. Thirty percent of blacks compared to 14 percent of whites felt police used insulting language; 24 percent of blacks versus 10 percent of whites said police frisked or searched people without adequate reason; and 29 percent of blacks compared to 9 percent of whites felt police used unnecessary force in making arrests in their neighborhood.³⁶⁰

With the drug crisis gripping the city in horrendous fashion, Atlanta Public Safety Commissioner George Napper declared that there was nothing within his power that could curtail criminal activity as a result of drugs. As part of his solution to this problem, Napper created the “Red Dog Unit” in April 1988 to provide an aggressive police presence in areas that have a high incidence of street drug sales, use, and drug related crimes. In just seven months, the “Red Dogs” were responsible for 721 felony arrest.³⁶¹ The establishment of the “Red Dog Unit” was partly at the behest of citizen complaints and media exposure that suggested City Hall was not working to quell the flood of drugs in the city and to combat other crimes.

As a result of the establishment of the “Red Dog Unit” led by Lt. H.B. Goldhagen of the Atlanta Police Department’s Special Operations Section, police raided nine drug-infested areas in 6 days. The term “red dog” was an old football term meaning blitz or attack all at once, like

³⁵⁹ Larry Copeland, “Blacks See Drugs as No. 1 Problem in City, Poll Shows,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 8 May 1988.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ State of the City Address, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 3 January 1989; Duly Noted: Police Commissioner George Napper was a Berkeley –educated criminologist, a Ph.D. author with more than 20 years of experience however, he had never been on a police beat and was considered by many of his officers as an out-of – touch academic—a sort of an absent-minded professor.

blitzing the quarterback.” According the “Red Dog Unit,” they aimed “to come in real fast and hard and go over any obstacle to get to the drug dealers.” Most of their targets were low-income buildings and housing projects. The unit consisted of 25-30 of Atlanta’s fittest and able-bodied police.³⁶²

The “Red Dog Unit” was quite effective. At the McDaniel-Glenn housing project, they sized 230 packets of crack cocaine and nearly \$2,000 the night before. At the Allen Temple apartments of the Southwest side of the City, officers moved silently in on the reputed “Miami Boys,” a drug cartel believed to be connected to a Jamaican or Haitian posse headquartered in Miami. However, “Red Dog” activities put more fear in apartment and public housing tenants. During a bust with no results at the Allen Temple Apartments, a woman yelled to Public Safety Commission Napper, “Y’all don’t know what you’ve done to me and my family. They gonna think we called the police. Two of ‘em got uzis and y’all didn’t get either one. Me and my family is through.” Another woman said that “drug dealers lobbed bricks through windows if residents don’t let dealers in when the cops come.” At another housing project, dealers reserved a row of parking spaces for their customers.³⁶³ The reference to an uzi speaks of the kind of submachine gun widely considered a machine gun pistol and was the weapon of choice for corner boys, young dealers that worked for a posse.

The duo of race and criminal activity had been a divisive issue that split Atlanta along racial lines. Both Maynard Jackson’s and Andrew Young’s administrations had been accused of being soft on crime. The overall portrait was that one’s safety, on Atlanta’s downtown streets,

³⁶² Sandra McIntosh, “Police, In Quick Night Strikes, Raid 9 Areas for Drugs,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 22 May 1988.

³⁶³ Dickerson, Jeff, “To Weaken Drug Trade, Put No Leash on Red Dog,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 17 June 1988.

was in jeopardy and as result, stifled downtown shopping, dining and recreation. However, Hornsby notes that the true portrayal of the city was that most of the crime took place in black low income neighborhoods and housing projects. Black attitudes towards controlling crime were influenced by the city's long history of police brutality of its black citizens.³⁶⁴ This strategy worked well to clean up the streets, but the incidence of police brutality rose as a result of the "Red Dog" unit, who struck fear in the hearts of residents in high-crime neighborhoods.

An incident of police brutality at the George Washington Carver housing project in the southeast section of Atlanta best portrays division along racial lines over the issue of public safety and law enforcement in 1980s. On September 10, 1987, Eddie Lee Callahan was shot five times in the back by Officer Michael Long. Callahan, a Vietnam War Veteran, purportedly grappled with police and took a revolver away from Long's partner, Ridley A. Watson. Callahan died from six wounds, five in the back and one at close range. Long and Watson maintained that their lives were endangered by Callahan's attempt to gain control of the gun, but according to Hornsby, several Carver Homes residents who witnessed the altercation asserted that Callahan was restrained on the ground when Long fired five consecutive shots to his back at point blank range. Both a Fulton County jury and an internal police panel cleared Long of excessive force in the unlawful death. But Watson, who was not charged in the incident, was fired. Public Safety Commissioner Napper said Watson's release resulted from "8 or 10" citizen complaints against the officer over a three year period.³⁶⁵

According to Hornsby, in the days following the Callahan shootings, residents of Carver Homes joined with Atlanta City Councilman Hosea Williams. They asserted that the white

³⁶⁴ Hornsby, 162

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

police officers had “murdered” a restrained black man and that Mayor Young and Commissioner Napper refused to punish them. After the internal police panel and a Fulton County jury exonerated the officers, the protests continued. Young made an effort to calm the situation by going to Carver Homes to urge the residents to allow the processes of the law to determine what happened and who should be punished. For yet another time, in his tenure as mayor, Young was met with hisses and boos as result of a fatal incident in one of Atlanta’s housing projects. Young was also met with a personal, political attack from Councilman Williams, a former ally in the Civil Rights Movement.³⁶⁶

Williams’ demanded that another grand jury be assembled to investigate recent police shootings in Atlanta and Fulton County. According to Williams, “the mayor became very, very, upset, and invited me outside to fight it out in the streets.” However, Williams noted that the fight was not between Young and Williams, “this was a fight between the oppressed citizens and the volatile police department” in general and Atlanta City hall in particular. Williams presented a list of demands to Young on behalf of a coalition called the Metro Atlanta Coalition to Stop Senseless Police Brutality. Members included Williams, state Rep. Tyrone Books (D-Atlanta), Louise Watley, president of the Carver Homes Tenants Association, Hosea Williams II and Charles Callahan, brother of Eddie Callahan. The group demanded that Young join them in asking Fulton County District attorney Lewis Slaton to assemble another “unbiased” grand jury to hear the Callahan case. The coalition also demanded that Slaton allow a new grand jury to hear the case of former Fulton County Sheriff’s Deputy Willie Nash, who shot Alvin Lamar Montgomery in the back of the head, considered widely to be another act of brutality.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Hornsby, 162-163.

³⁶⁷ Larry Copeland, “I Sought Probe, The Mayor a Scuffle, Williams’ Says,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 22 October 1987.

According to Hornsby, although Young hoped that justice would prevail in the Callahan case, white Atlantans charged the city's administration with ineffectiveness towards crime, denouncing the firing of Watson as retribution for Long. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* columnist Dick Williams cited several examples of robberies and murders of professionals in the downtown business district and concluded that actions taken against Watson and Long made Atlanta's "Finest" gun-shy.³⁶⁸

Before the summer months of 1987, three officers had been shot, eight officers had been cited for disciplinary actions arising out of the Julian Bond Affair,³⁶⁹ another went to court to defend his actions in the shooting of Eddie Callahan, and another officer was awaiting trial for allegedly shooting a drug dealer outside a hooker's house. Just as the Bond incident was being resolved, the Callahan case thrust the department back under public scrutiny.

Public Housing

The most critical aspect of crime and punishment was seen in the lives of those dependent on public assistance. In Atlanta, the Atlanta Housing Authority had been a vanguard in regards to race and public housing since 1937, when Harold Ickles dedicated University Homes and forty other housing projects had been constructed in black neighborhoods throughout the city. Despite a valiant effort, Young admitted that he had failed to meet the city's demand for

³⁶⁸ Hornsby, 163; Dick Williams, "Napper Can't Win For Losing," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 24 November 1987.

³⁶⁹ This refers to an incident where Julian Bond's wife Alice alleged that Bond, as well as other prominent Atlantans, including Andrew Young, used cocaine. When Young telephoned Alice Bond about the allegations, the FBI investigated whether Young attempted to obstruct justice. As a result, four white officers were transferred out of their division before they could fully investigate drug allegations, believing that the transfers of narcotics officers as being politically motivated.

affordable housing. To no surprise, Young understood the failure to meet the economic and social needs of thousands of Atlantans, who were overwhelmingly black, already housed in the city's dilapidating housing projects. The worsening conditions that plagued the more modern housing complexes, such as Bankhead Courts in the Northwest Atlanta were shocking.³⁷⁰

Bankhead Courts were built on a dump site in 1970 at a cost of almost \$10 million. It is sandwiched between Interstate 285 and the Chattahoochee River a mile north of Interstate 20 on the edge of the city, which allowed it to become self-contained. By the end of 1988, the 500 units housed 1,703 tenants, 1,025 of them younger than 19 years of age; eighty-one of the units were vacant. The average monthly rent was \$79. Ninety-eight percent of the households were headed by single women, many of them either teen-aged mothers or young grandmothers. According to the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) the average age of grandmothers in Bankhead Courts was 32. The average annual family income was \$3,500. Only 42 of the 1703 tenants were employed.³⁷¹

What was striking about Bankhead Courts was that it had become too dangerous for letter carriers, telephone repairmen, taxi drop offs and emergency services. Most of these services were either cut or waned significantly as a result of drug related violence. Violence was so rampant, that a three day hiatus of mail delivery and restriction of phone service was a normal occurrence. The Atlanta Housing Authority acknowledged serious sewage and plumbing problems caused by the apartment's location. Although the AHA spent more than \$2 million in repairs from 1984-1988, it would cost another \$1.5 million to renovate each of the 81 vacant

³⁷⁰ Hornsby, 163; State of the City Address, 3 January 1988, pp. 26, 30, 40; *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 September 1983; *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 15 September 1985.

³⁷¹ Adam Gelb, "Isolated Bankhead Courts Grows Accustomed to Violence," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 25 December 1988.

apartments. “We would tear it down and relocated everybody...if we had the authorization from Washington.” Beyond the physical deficiencies, Bankhead Courts had serious management difficulties that left the project without a single social program or organized activity.³⁷²

In light of the dire conditions seen in Bankhead Courts, several black public officials and civic leader, including state senator Arthur Langford, City Councilman Archie Byron, and Fulton County Commission Chairman Michael Lomax amassed ‘educational vigils’ in the drug-infested apartments. Noted by Hornsby, the vigil was cut short when gunfire was heard. But political and civic figures experienced a first-hand account from tenants the nature of the drug crisis, as well as other social and economical ills in order to assure them of their concerns.³⁷³

Hornsby notes that Andrew Young was aware and concerned about the housing needs and social ills of inner city projects and he was uneasy about the reported 10,000 homeless persons in Atlanta as he seemed more preoccupied with the development of upscale housing in the central city. According to Young, good jobs required good housing which were at the center of his economic plan for the economic development of downtown Atlanta. However, Young’s policies frequently ran opposite to his aspirations, as demonstrated in the City’s proposed agreement with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) that promoted downtown housing expansion. His Commissioner of Community Development convinced Young that the \$13.5 million location price tag was too high and that the project spent too much of the Community Development resources. As a result, the city’s neglect to purchase did not foil

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Hornsby, 164.

all opportunity for housing expansion near the Atlanta Civic Center; however, the chance to capitalize waned significantly.³⁷⁴

Downtown progress through upscale housing, while the centerpiece to downtown renewal, was also seen as a new catalyst for gentrification—buying and renovation of buildings in deteriorated urban neighborhoods by upper or middle-income families or individuals, improving property values but often displacing low-income families and small businesses. In the case of Atlanta, this meant white flight back into the central city. Because of the concern that gentrification could weaken black political might and, hence, black political control of the city, Young seldom spoke of this matter in terms of race. Yet, it was clear that those in most need of affordable housing were black lower income residents—one of Young’s most reliable constituencies.

Transportation

According to Hornsby, Young’s greatest contribution to transportation in regards to Atlanta was to the airport, which was among the worlds busiest; MARTA had extended into the far corners towards the northeast Atlanta and to the Airport, and the downtown freeway was broadened from six to ten lanes. However, Young was unsuccessful in adding additional runways at Hartsfield-International Airport, white suburbanites refused to use MARTA, North Atlanta neighborhoods were still congested with traffic, and Young had not been successful in building a parkway to the Jimmy Carter library. Despite adding two new runways since 1981, the airport, often in competition with O’Hare Airport as the world’s busiest airport, had grown and needed new runways to not only compete with O’Hare but to prevent long delays in both

³⁷⁴ Hornsby, 165.

takeoffs and landings. Delays resulted in a boost of other southern hubs such as Charlotte, Nashville or Memphis. However, many Clayton County residents opposed new runway expansion, claiming that noise pollution would decrease their property value and quality of life. What seemed to be clear to the residents living near Hartsfield Airport was that airport expansion was not at the behest of efficiency, it was to dole out that Atlanta had the world's busiest airport.³⁷⁵

An example of Young's business savoir-faire was seen while in the United Kingdom on one of his numerous trips abroad to get international capital to invest in Atlanta. Young had heard that both UK airports Heathrow and Gatwick sold for \$3 billion under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's privatization plan. Young knew that Atlanta's airport was bigger than both airports put together and more modern. With this in mind, he called Bill Coleman, the Secretary of Transportation when the airport was expanded, and asked him to look into the covenants that governed airport operations. Being the pro-business and neo-liberal mayor that he was, Young believed that he could give control of the airport to a private Georgia Board but continue to have it managed by the City of Atlanta on contract to a private agency. This freed the City of the \$600 million dollar airport debt.³⁷⁶ It also exposed Atlanta to the epitome of neo-liberalism, the blending of liberal political views with an emphasis on economic growth.

Young's rationale was this. If the city of Atlanta could get \$2 billion for Hartsfield International Airport, it could have paid off the city's airport debt and had a billion and a half left for a trust fund, which could run the city in perpetuity. Young wanted to use the billion dollar trust fund to eliminate all residential property taxes with half of the interest. With one-fourth of the interest, he planned to give a free college education to every Atlanta Public Schools

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Gary Pomerantz, Interview with Andrew Young, 24 July 1995, Gary Pomerantz Collection, EU, MARBL.

graduating senior. With the other fourth, he wanted to create a low-income public housing trust fund that could indefinitely fund projects like Habitat for Humanity for the working poor to own homes. This would have left the city debt free.³⁷⁷

Young's attempt to privatize the airport was met with great resistance. The Georgia Assembly said that Young wanted to sell the airport to the Japanese. The Japanese were heavily investing in the city. Nevertheless, Young knew that there was a law that prohibited any airline to have more than twenty-five percent ownership of the airport. This allowed for city officials to sell up to twenty-five percent of the stocks to international ownership by creating stock bonds where international buyers could have bought up to twenty-five percent in stock controlled by a Georgia Board. This proposal was voted down. But Young asserted that "nobody is questioning Heathrow and Gatwick."³⁷⁸

Young's hand in progress towards transportation was at a minimum considering he inherited a city with a new airport and a brave attempt for public transportation. However, Young's legacy in regard to transportation could have been greater, had his economic plan included low rent housing and job training. In turn, jobs provided for low rent tenants would have allowed workers to use the MARTA to destinations around the city and would refund monies that would have been paid by suburban white workers refusing to use public transportation to go into the city.

Because the MARTA nearly operated in a deficit through out the 1980s, despite opposition from central city residents, the fee for public transportation reached \$.85, a negotiation reached by those who wanted little to no raise in the fare and those who wanted a

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

significant increase. This stipulation, noted by Hornsby, stated that the new fare would stay the same for three years, however, by the end of 1988, it was in danger and MARTA needed an in addition \$7.5-\$10 million by the summer of 1989 or undergo significant cuts to bus services, a mode of transportation used by Atlanta's poor and overwhelmingly black residents.³⁷⁹ With federal support dwindling from \$49 million to \$9 million, what was crucial to MARTA surviving was that it needed to be an increase in use amongst riders. The lucrative rail-line that connected from downtown southwest to the airport supported this idea. However, MARTA lines and bus routes from white suburban communities in North Fulton, Gwinnett and Cobb counties were the necessary component that would provide the extra funding needed to sustain MARTA as a big city transit authority. White suburban resistance to MARTA, as mentioned earlier, hinged on a number of beliefs perceived by former white flight communities. Many hypotheses included cited increased traffic in residential areas, fears that property would be converted from residential areas to MARTA parking lots, disturbances of schools and fears of crime and the trespassing of vagrants, vagabonds and rascals.³⁸⁰ However, at the heart of this matter was the issue of race, particularly white supremacy galvanized in all white suburban areas used to make the black city government fail in an attempt to take back the city.

Other hot button issues in respect to the Young administration, race and transportation were the building of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Parkway that would grant access to the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and expansion of state highway Georgia 400 in to the wealthy overwhelmingly white Buckhead community so that the wealthy could access the city's

³⁷⁹ Hornsby, 166.

³⁸⁰ Gary Pomerantz, Interview with Andrew Young, 24 July 1995, Gary Pomerantz Collection, EU, MARBL; Hornsby, 166.

highways and interstates. Young, the former U.N. ambassador under President Jimmy Carter, whole-heartedly supported the Presidential Parkway, but the city's northeastern neighborhood leadership felt that this kind of urban renewal, seen as political appreciation to Carter, would divvy up or reduce long-standing neighborhoods to nothing. As a result, neighborhood groups protested the project through, none violent means, blocking construction equipment, political lobbying, and legal action through state and federal means to express their anxiety of the road being built.³⁸¹ What ensued as a result of resistant activity on the part of neighborhood leadership was a showdown not only between federal and local officials, but a showdown for black Atlanta's political clout.

Neighborhood groups in opposition to the Presidential Parkway project called on U.S. Representative John Lewis of Atlanta. Lewis had also served under Carter as the associate director of ACTION for Domestic Operations.³⁸² He urged the U.S. Department of Transportation to suspend federal funding for the parkway to no avail. He then attempted to get the House Public Works and Transportation Committee to prohibit the use of federal money for the parkway also to no avail. What Lewis did not know was that Young was a political ally to House Public Works and Transportation committee and used his own political might to get the downtown expressways repaved. An example of this can be seen when Young became mayor. The completion of road repair was a constant problem. Young went to Tom Moreland, one of the nations leading road-building experts with 30 years of experience with the Georgia Department of Transportation. Moreland stated that the City could not get the money to finish the roads and that he needed some help to secure funding. Both Young and Moreland met with

³⁸¹ Hornsby, 167.

³⁸² ACTION was a U.S. government agency for the Federal Domestic Volunteer Agency formed in 1970.

Jim Howard, Chairman of the Public Works committee in Washington and over a billion dollars were given to the state of Georgia for roads. As Young prepared to leave office, though the parkway was not constructed due to legal and political quagmires, it seemed as if all roadblocks had been removed. As such, he called on Russian sculptor, Zurab Tzereteli to carve a thirty-foot, 300-ton statute to tower the parkway.³⁸³

In 1986, the Atlanta City Council agreed on plans for Georgia 400 without approving construction providing that the Georgia Department of Transportation would return to the body for approval. Though Atlanta's business elite admired the intended toll road, neighborhood groups resisted stating the negative implications that would result in building an express way through Buckhead. Just as it was with the Presidential Parkway, neighborhood groups felt that Georgia 400 would divvy up and reduce long-standing neighborhoods to nothing. On October 19, 1988, neighborhood groups filed a grievance in the Fulton County Superior Court demanding that the state be absolved from building the road because construction had yet to be accepted by the Atlanta City Council. Simultaneously, Atlanta's City Council passed a resolution prohibiting all toll roads, the Georgia 400 included. Shortly thereafter, the Atlanta City Council banned toll roads in the city and Buckhead Neighborhood groups filed suit against the construction of Georgia 400. Young vetoed the toll bans stating the "the collection of tolls was a 'necessary component' for building Georgia 400," an important artery to the city. Young asserted that banning tolls was "an impediment for the city and state in [the] efforts to complete this much needed freeway."³⁸⁴

³⁸³ Hornsby, 167; *Atlanta Constitution*, November 15, 1988; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 10 November 1988; Gary Pomerantz, An Interview with Andrew Young, 24 July 1995, Gary Pomerantz Collection, EU, MARBL.

³⁸⁴ Hornsby, 168; See also Andrew Young, "The Presidential Parkway Would Strengthen Neighborhood in Which it's Build," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 27 February 1988 and Andrew Young, "Atlanta Has a Commitment to Historic Preservation-and the Future," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 2 August 1986.

As the Atlanta City Council worked to override the Young's veto, Atlanta's business elite initiated an unparalleled lobbying campaign to avert the veto override. Young and Atlanta's business elite asserted that the construction of Georgia 400 would alleviate traffic congestions that cramped not only comfort, but also business. Neighborhood groups countered stating that extending the MARTA rail line, which preserved neighborhoods, would rectify Atlanta's transportation needs. An important component to Young's economic development program, interstate expansion was key because it further solidified Atlanta's reputation as a model city for transportation feats, considering it was once a rail hub, home to the world's busiest airport and had MARTA, which made it an attractive business venue or better yet, as the aim of the "Forward Atlanta" one of the nations "boomtowns." However, the distribution of wealth amongst the citizens was imbalanced. The wealthy Buckhead community, as well as northern suburbs in Gwinnett County boomed so, that the infrastructure could not handle the ebb and flow of daily life. Employment in these areas skyrocketed with technical jobs that moved to Atlanta in particular and the Sunbelt in general. However, the economic savior-faire was far less impressive in downtown Atlanta and its southern, largely black businesses and residential enclaves.³⁸⁵

Atlanta was a perfect example of what was called the "split-level South." The metropolitan area, predominantly white, had expanded dramatically, with a population growth of more than twenty-two percent and a job growth of forty-three percent. According to the 1990 Census, the mostly black inner city grew by one percent in population, with an unemployment rate that was more than twice that of whites. Auburn Avenue was the main thoroughfare in the once-thriving black Atlanta business district. However, except for the area near Ebenezer

³⁸⁵ Hornsby, 168; Thomas Oliver, "Atlanta: The Unequal North and South of it," *Black Slate Digest*, May, 1985, 1-2.

Baptist Church and the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, it was in shambles. In the 15 years since Atlanta had a black mayor, and despite all the millions of dollars invested in the downtown and Midtown business districts, Auburn Avenue remained a ragged island in a sea of influence.³⁸⁶

Much of this was due to the chagrining practices where Atlanta's banking institutions lent little, if any capital to black residential and business aspirations. To shed light on this notion, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* printed a Pulitzer Prize winning series called "The Color of Money" that focused on racial discrimination in regards to mortgage lending. The series charged the majority of banks in Atlanta, except black owned Citizen Trust Bank and Mutual Federal Savings and Loan of the unlawful practice of "redlining."³⁸⁷ This allegation resulted in numerous local and federal investigations. Indeed, Atlanta banks rejected the accusation of "redlining and took concerted strides to be more inclusive of majority black south Atlanta. According to Alton Hornsby, a consortium of banks created a \$65 million loan fund with reduced interest and developers aligned with the non-profit Cabbagetown Restoration and Future Trust [CRAFT] to refurbish twenty-five homes to be sold at low interest rates to poor and middle income persons in an older mostly white community called "Cabbagetown." Simultaneously, the city approved the sale of the Candler Warehouse property in southwest Atlanta. This move served as a catalyst to push for revitalization in the area.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ Robert L. Woodson, "Building a New Base for Black Prosperity," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 31 July 1988.

³⁸⁷ Bill Dedman, "The Color of Money," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1-4 May 1988; Redlining is described as the discriminatory practice by which banks, insurance companies, etc., refuse or limit loans, mortgages, insurance, etc., within specific geographic areas, esp. inner-city neighborhoods.

³⁸⁸ Hornsby, 169; See also Bill Dedman, "The Color of Money," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1-4 May 1988: "The Color of Money" was researched and written over a period of five months.

Minority Business Development

In regards to minority business, Atlanta's crowned jewel was the Minority Business Enterprise program started during the Maynard Jackson administration. It mandated that thirty-five percent of all city contracts be given to minority businesses and developers. During Young's mayoral tenure, 500 minority owned and operated firms did approximately \$200 million worth of business for the city. By the end of Young's final term, the city had awarded thirty-seven percent, an approximate total of \$30 million dollars worth of work to minority firms.³⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the assessment of this accomplishment was that nearly all of the minority contracts went to a small cartel of black owned firms.³⁹⁰ This criticism can be seen as Young buying political favors by giving contracts to his favorites, creating only a few black millionaires, and leaving other minorities excluded from this cadre.

Atlanta's concerted efforts to augment minority and poor economic situation came when the Atlanta City Council unanimously decided to mandate private businesses contracted to do public work to hire fifty percent of all extra, unskilled help from a list of the city's "down and out" workers in a program called the "First Source" program. There was much concern about the veracity of the program based on qualification standards as seen by laborers and the affirmative action as seen by contractors. Moreover, the *Atlanta Constitution* viewed the idea of helping a sector of Atlanta's underclass capture a bit of the prosperity enjoyed by the rest of Atlanta as admirable.³⁹¹ This gesture may have been admirable, but it was also paternalistic.

³⁸⁹ Gary Pomerantz, Interview with Andrew Young, 24 July 1995, Gary Pomerantz Collection, EU, MARBL.

³⁹⁰ Andrew Young, "Fairness Formula Has Been Crucial to Atlanta's Success," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 13 March 1989; See also Hornsby, 169.

³⁹¹ Hornsby, 169.

Young's citizen of the world persona continued to boost Atlanta as a new juggernaut in convention and tourism while soliciting new foreign investors. Young and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce knew it was not possible to meet the employment needs, particularly in terms of unskilled and semi-skilled labor which further lends credence that the nature of this program was, in turn, just what the *Atlanta Constitution* deemed it, an admirable gesture.

Urban Renewal and Gentrification

Young lured financiers from London, Amsterdam, Zurich, Canada, Stockholm and Tokyo to invest in downtown Atlanta projects, contacts gathered during his years in congress and as ambassador to the United Nations. As a result, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Monarch Plaza in the Buckhead community were a Dutch investments; Fifty- Five Park Place was a Canadian investment, new apartments on 14th Street that were later used as the Olympic Village were British Investments, and there were numerous hotels erected that were Swedish Investments. According to Young and as a result of Reaganomics, he could either raise taxes, cut services, or make the economy grow; he decided to make the economy grow.³⁹²

Young's willingness to court international investors was perceived by Atlanta's working and poor classes as neglect. To Young, international investments meant jobs and "that's the way you feed the hungry." His panoramic view of what downtown Atlanta needed indicated his macro-managing style that delegated authority too freely and left the duties of mayor to his staff.

³⁹² William Womack, Interview With Andrew Young, Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasters Oral History Interviews, Auburn Avenue Research Library, Atlanta, Georgia; The Ritz-Carlton Buckhead was a 517 elegantly appointed guest room, including 58 suites that overlooked Downtown Atlanta; the Monarch Plaza was a 16 story class A Office building with 368,688 square feet; and 55 Park Place was a 19 story office building with 553,468 square feet built by Cushman & Wakefield of Georgia, Inc.

In pursuing investors, Young became known as the “businessman’s mayor,” who championed urban renewal and gentrification with no respect for historic landmarks. He was christened ‘the globetrotting mayor’ because of his international trips seeking new investors.³⁹³

As the Atlanta Urban Design Commission (AUDC) sought to preserve historical landmarks around the downtown area, Young usurped its ruling and approved construction of new hotels and office buildings at the cost of demolishing historical landmarks. He operated from the perspective that history must yield to the present and the future, especially where economic development was concerned. According to Hornsby, at the annual awards program of the AUDC in the Spring of 1986, organization’s executive director and chairman lectured Young on the pertinence of historic landmarks to the life and culture of a city. Travel guide writer Arthur Frommer also chimed in and warned that Atlanta “can’t attract people just with hotels and not life. Unless downtown Atlanta became more livable, there would be a serious downturn in the city’s convention and tourism. What’s pitiful is that the mayor of Atlanta is not sympathetic to this.”³⁹⁴

As the “globetrotting” mayor attained downtown development, he received national and international commendations as the catalyst that set the standard for creating the model of urban renewal and gentrification through neo-liberalism. Phoenix, Arizona mayor Terry Goddard, president of the National League of Cities stated that “the success of Atlanta is fabled and known to us all....Mayor Young gets a lot of credit for that.” However, amongst Atlantans, there was a sentiment of disregard from the mayor and many wished that he would spend more time at home

³⁹³ Pomerantz, 497; Hornsby, 169-170.

³⁹⁴ Hornsby, 170.

than abroad.³⁹⁵ Many Atlantans wondered how Young was at ease with taking international trips at the expense of tax-payers. However, he insisted that he never let his constituency pay for his travel and that he traveled internationally at the behest of the people that invited him.³⁹⁶

As Young's business plan for the city hinged on national and international investments and projects, it also included an initiative to make Atlanta a convention and tourists poster child. Nonetheless, this portrayal of Atlanta was threatened when the Atlanta Falcon's football franchise threatened to leave the city in 1986. This greatly disturbed Atlanta's government and business elite because it threatened the city's image. As stated in previous chapters, the Atlanta Falcons of the National Football League and the Atlanta Braves of Major League Baseball shared Fulton County Stadium located in the heart of southeast Atlanta. Fulton-County stadium, at its erection, was considered to be a state of the art facility; however, by the early 1980s, the 60,000 seat facility was one of the lesser sports venues in the nation with the worst playing turf in professional sports.. In 1988, the Atlanta Braves made similar threats in the similar likeness. The Falcons had Jacksonville, Florida as its prospective city as the Braves began to negotiate relocating to Atlanta's suburban counties.³⁹⁷

In a series of events that resulted in a stalemate between private investors and the city, the project was salvaged in the nick of time when Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris announced that he had developed a plan where the state of Georgia would donate land near the Georgia World Congress Center, the state's largest convention facility, as the stadium site. This proposal would allow the "Dome" to supplement the state-owned Congress center, solidifying the

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ William Womack, Interview With Andrew Young, Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasters Oral History Interviews, Auburn Avenue Research Library, Atlanta, Georgia.

³⁹⁷ Hornsby, 171.

facilities as one convention exhibit and entertainment complex colossus. Harris also proposed that additional construction and operating costs outside of those provided by private investors, could be managed by the state if the state permitted the City of Atlanta and Fulton County to increase their sales taxes by up to two cents on the dollar. He vowed to promote this plan in the Georgia General Assembly during its 1989 session. Both the Atlanta City Council and the Fulton County Commission approved the state-supported pitch with stipulations that incited another stalemate. Both the City and County demanded a \$10 million housing trust fund for displaced families in neighborhoods near the proposed Dome construction site, some financial consideration for affected churches, a guarantee that thirty-five percent of contracts in the design and construction of the Dome went to minority firms, and representation on the governing board of the Georgia World Congress Center, the overseeing body of construction and operation of the Dome. The private investors and state officials found these terms ridiculous and a gridlock ensued; another hold was put on construction. However, another miraculous nick of time salvage plan emerged to save the future of professional sports in Atlanta.³⁹⁸

As mayor of course, Andrew Young made enemies within the church communities as a result of the building of the Dome stadium. The churches made off with a good price as Young closed off the streets and made the state pay for the streets so that he would see to it that churches were compensated. Though Young worked to compensate churches and neighborhoods for the inconvenience of relocation, he missed the point of concern held by churches and neighborhood organizations. His component of economic development that included the

³⁹⁸ Hornsby, 171-172.

[Georgia] Dome interrupted the lifestyles and habits of Atlanta's low-income communities and further asserted its disregard for historical markers within the city.³⁹⁹

Though the construction of the Dome continued to frustrate officials, Young doted two feats deemed as major successes. City Hall tentatively agreed with MCA to build a multi-million dollar, 18,000-seat amphitheater on the Southside of the city. The residual affects of this project would provide jobs and more capital generated from taxes. It also served as stimulus to revitalize Atlanta's Southside.⁴⁰⁰ This venue would also prove to be an alternative to the Omni, the sports venue where the National Basketball Association's Atlanta Hawks played their basketball games.

In 1987, Billy Payne, a lawyer, investment banker and former All-Southeastern Conference football player for the University of Georgia Bulldog football team approached Andrew Young about hosting the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Young aspired to be an Olympian who competed at the Olympics Trials in 1951 at Quantico Marine Base. In that foot race which was his first competitive race ever, Young, who borrowed someone's track shoes, ran an impressive 21.4 seconds in the 220k dash, breaking a ten year old record.⁴⁰¹ According to an interview done with Gary Pomerantz, Payne's initial meeting with Young made him feel as if he was wasting the Mayor's time, until he brought up the involvement with children. However, Young admitted that he was interested in Payne's proposition from the beginning.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁹ Gary Pomerantz, Interview with Andrew Young, 19 May 1992, Gary Pomerantz Collection, EU, MARBL.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Gary Pomerantz, An Interview with Andrew Young, 24 July 1995, Gary Pomerantz Collection, EU, MARBL.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

From all accounts, the most important event for the city and under the leadership of Andrew Young was Atlanta's hosting of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) Convention in the summer of 1988. After the DNC Convention took place in San Francisco in 1984, the Democratic Party looked to host the next convention in a southern venue. Atlanta was sure to be in the running with Houston and New Orleans as the convention site. Houston and New Orleans had larger and more modern facilities; however Atlanta had better commercial capability and public transportation as well as hotel accommodations. Yet, what gave Atlanta the edge was that it was home to President Jimmy Carter, who had been the last Democrat elected as Commander-in-Chief, his former U.N. Ambassador Young, and Democratic governor Joe Frank Harris. This triumvirate was critical to the formation of an umbrella group called "Atlanta 88" a cadre that traveled to Democratic bulwarks flattering the DNC site selection committee members, especially DNC party chairman Paul Kirk, inundating them with "southern hospitality" when visiting Atlanta. What stood against Atlanta was the small, outdated Omni Arena, an arena with 15,000 seats. But the DNC endorsed the Omni Arena and Atlanta citing that ingenious architectural design could alleviate the problem and awarded Atlanta the 1988 Democratic National Convention.⁴⁰³

Though the DNC picked Atlanta as host for the '88 Convention, the press published unbecoming accounts about Atlanta. Attacks against the Omni ranged from its capacity and esoteric qualities. The press asserted that the city lacked important cultural sites and had a less than stellar nightlife. Media portrayal of the city showed Atlanta as less than ready for prime time. The 1988 Democratic National Convention concluded with approbation for Atlanta and her growth and promise. Atlanta embodied the epitome of "southern hospitality" in genuine fashion and Young and Governor Joe Frank Harris were credited with the city's success.

⁴⁰³ Hornsby, 173.

Wyoming governor Mike Sullivan stated, “Atlanta established a new standard [of hospitality] during the Democratic National Convention. It was a marvelous effort...you have every reason to be proud of your city, your people.” Donald Ward, Director of Special Markets of the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, an advocate for Houston to host stated that he “ ‘tip its hat’ to Atlanta for its outstanding success in hosting. The 1988 convention in Atlanta had to be one of the most outstanding successes in political party history.” The citizens of Atlanta characterized the convention as a great success. According to the city’s foremost architect, John Portman stated:

All Atlanta can feel proud of Mayor Andrew Young as he graciously hosted the most important convention of the city’s history. What made his contribution particularly special? It is his leadership. Leadership in helping the convention come to Atlanta in the first place. Leadership demonstrated by his diplomatic handling of civil disobedience. Leadership in helping beautify Atlanta with the Trees Atlanta and Peachtree Planters program...And finally leadership in helping our visitors from all over the world feel at home.... At a time when Atlanta is working hard to become “the next great international city,” Andrew Young helped make the city a little more personal and a little more friendly than any other city in the world. And that’s something which all Atlantans can be proud.⁴⁰⁴

The most convicting charge that Young endured was that his platform during his two terms in office centered on economic development. He accomplished his goal in making Atlanta a true international city, but by many, he was seen as a neo-liberal too accommodating to business needs in respects that few other and white mayors had been. Support came from across party lines to push his pro-business stance. Though Young believed that the offspring of a vibrant business-savvy Atlanta did beget jobs and other resources that he thought would trickle down to the poor; very little of that took place during his mayoral tenure.

⁴⁰⁴ "Letters to the Editor - Embarrassing Revelations." *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 10 August 1988, A/14; See also Hornsby, 175.

In the final moments of his terms, Atlanta's poor blacks began to express their popular public sentiment, which on all fronts asserted that Andrew Young cared very little for poor people. Even Susie LaBord, President of the Grady Homes Housing Project Tenant association and the same woman who convinced a disinterested Young to run for mayor in 1982, blamed his too often travel abroad as his Achilles heel amongst black Atlanta's poor. She stated "So many times, things happen and we can't find him. If he is concerned, you'd never know it. This city hasn't moved forward. There ain't no better jobs and they are getting harder and harder to get. He should be doing more." Other critics believed that Young's borrowing of the "trickle down" from Reagan's America as well as central theme lost their way. Political Scientist Robert L Woodson believed that Young "failed to understand the difference between jobs and wealth. No matter how good one's job, a job is not something one can leave to one's children. Homes, businesses, and other capital assets represent the wealth that can, in turn create jobs."⁴⁰⁵

During the 1980s, Atlanta had the second highest poverty rate, a large homeless population, a high drop out rate along with a drug crisis and a recession; it can be assumed that crime was immeasurable. However, in the end, while the city was on solid financial grounds, many of the needs of Atlanta's people were left unmet. Mid-town and the northern enclaves endured burgeoning growth and successes while the south and west sides of the city remained in dire straits. Its transportation system was one of the most modern; however racism reared its ugly head to stifle its potential. While Atlanta sought international status, it struggled to get its white citizens to visit down town. But Young succeeded at one thing, he sold Atlanta to the world as the newest American city. Perhaps what was most striking and promising about the 1988 Democratic National Convention was Atlanta, as seen by the international press. The *Times of London* called the convention "the most spectacular event to hit the city since General

⁴⁰⁵ Hornsby, 177-178.

Sherman—a republican –burnt it down in 1864”; Israel state television said Atlanta “was trying to showcase itself to the world”; a French reporter stated, “It is appropriate that the convention is here because this year, for the first time, blacks feel they are really participating in the system”; the *Daily Telegraph* in London stated, “This is not politics. This is show time”; the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* asserted, “Mayor Andrew Young rules a city where political power is black and economic power is white”; and Bonn’s daily newspaper the *General Anzeiger* stated “this boomtown in the American South looks like an energetic combination of Washington and Hollywood. However, not all accounts were favorable and as such, journalists did not fail to note the economic discrepancies dividing the city’s white and black populations. Peter Jenkins, a respected British columnist likened Atlanta to a “vast and hideous concrete pile”; and Britain’s Independent Television News noted, “even in this pride of the New South, some ways of the old South live on in secret.”⁴⁰⁶ It was clear that Atlanta was a rising force to be reckoned with whether the world liked it or not. The Democratic National Convention set the stage for what may be the watershed moment of international inclusion in the history of the American South, and Atlanta would be at the center of this event.

⁴⁰⁶ Matthew Vita, Decision ’88—A View from Foreign Press: ‘This is Not Politics; This is Show Time.’, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 21 July 1988, C/1.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPEAKING TO THE SPIRIT OF THE GAMES: ATLANTA AS BLACK NEW SOUTH MECCA AND OLYMPIC CITY THROUGH THE PRISM OF POPULAR CULTURE

*You can be sure, some will owe to get high, you may hurt till you cry. You may die... (you may die)Keep on trying (keep on trying). Till it's summer in the city! Till it's summer in the city.*⁴⁰⁷

Atlanta, Georgia was the only city to win the bid for the Olympic Games on its first attempt. A diverse cohort, with a plan of action, generated the funds needed to refashion a city plagued by urban blight and vice. It included influential businessmen: Chief Executive Officers of BellSouth, the Coca-Cola Company, Delta Airlines and Georgia Power; yet Andrew Young and Billy Payne along with Maynard Jackson Jr. remained the key figures in solidifying this accomplishment. With this, a series of events characterizing the scurrying of Atlanta's public officials and businessmen took place. This series of events henceforth will be referred to as the "olympification" of Atlanta.

With the same swiftness of Atlanta's rise to world class status came rebuke and scorn towards the city's transformation. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the black working and poor classes expressed resentment toward the leadership of Maynard Jackson and Andrew Young, developing specific responses to the different events and situations that emerged within the city. Such feelings of resentment were due mainly to the facelift experienced by the city at the cost of the black working poor and homeless who were frequently criminalized, segregated and further marginalized along class lines. There were often many within the black middle classes that saw Jackson and Young as business and political prodigies who gallantly led Atlanta into the 21st century by developing its world-class commercial status. Acquiring the Centennial Olympic bid

⁴⁰⁷ OutKast, "You May Die," *ATLiens LP*, 1996.

affirmed Atlanta's success and reinvigorated the city for global commerce, and for the second time, Atlanta had risen like its city symbol, the phoenix, refashioning itself in the midst of despondency. Atlanta's hosting of the Centennial Olympiad served as a pivotal moment for the American South in general and the black new south in particular. Black politicians and professionals stood at the center with others to await the American South's greatest achievement. Because of the Olympic Games, Atlanta's people, its history and culture became points of interest to the world and its new status situated it as the crux of intra-racial class tensions as seen in popular culture indigenous to the city, particularly the development of "Dirty South" rap music. This development opened black Atlanta and the Black New South to social commentary from a new generation of rap artists who lived in the underbelly trampled over by Atlanta's pursuit of a global commercial center. Dirty South rap music provided a new and different lens for exploring the intra-race and class tensions that attended the rise of the Black New South's most important political regime.

Indeed, the central need to investigate these tensions within Black New South cultural studies prompted this chapter. It examines Atlanta's shift from regional to world-class city on the heels of olympification, a movement that also created the space for a new genre of popular culture to enter into ongoing debates about race and class. By focusing on OutKast's early albums *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* and Goodie Mob's early album *Soul Food*, it is clear that this popular culture Atlanta served to counter Atlanta's mythical black Mecca status. Analyses of lyrics provided by these albums produced a counter narrative for these artists that uncovers the realities of black life of Atlanta's poor juxtaposed with the city's black Mecca status. Hence, this chapter will draw heavily on popular culture to give voice to a particular working class analysis of Atlanta political and economic makeover.

Hip Hop Music and Culture

East Coast

It has been over three decades since Hip hop emerged as a phenomenon reflecting cultural, social, political and economic milieus that were at the center of “Dirty Southern” Hip hop. Hip hop as a larger musical and cultural form fused aesthetics from numerous venues. A culture that connected the creativity of Clive Hercules “Kool Herc” Campbell, originally of Kingston, Jamaica, with Grandmaster Flash, Afrika Bambaataa, and others along with graffiti art and break-dancing that came together in the South Bronx is evidence of that. However, the music morphed into more distinct styles as it gained a foothold with different sub-cultures and eventually—sub-genres.

Since its inception in the mid 1970s, rap music, according to Matt Miller, was typified by the production and consumption by recognizing place and space through the means of “representing,” which identifies the relevance of one’s home town or neighborhood in regards to shaping the contours of the music. The grounds to which space and place are inextricably connected continue to be uncertain. Nonetheless, what should be considered is that this inextricable connection to place and space was a result of the marginalization of communities in politics, economics and mass media. Rap music power lay in the expression and transmission of place-based identities.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁸ Matt Miller, “Rap’s Dirty South: From Sub-Culture to Pop Culture,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 16, 2, (June 2004): 177.

Forging the Dirty South: OutKast and Goodie Mob

As gentrification and urban renewal engulfed Atlanta in the form of downtown construction, Atlanta slowly flourished into a newly emerging music scene that not only recorded, produced and distributed music on a nationwide scale, this new industry focused on the trends and tensions that shaped the city. According to Roni Sarig, friends Rico Wade and Patrick “Sleepy” Brown met with also friend Tionne “T-Boz” Watkins of TLC. Watkins was already affiliated with the then-wife of L.A. Reid, Perri “Pebbles” Reid, who was instrumental in developing the image of LaFace Records. Wade and Brown wanted to showcase their singing group the Uboyz to Reid. However, after listening to the group’s demo tape, she assessed that vocals were not their strength but liked the music’s production. Wade and Brown heeded Reid’s advice and met Ray Murray, a hip-hop producer and talent agent from Atlanta’s Greenbriar area. Murray was familiar with Atlanta’s talent scene at the grass-roots level and was knowledgeable of neighborhood talents that were emerging. He was also an artist in a group called Sixth Sense and making track for local artists. Wade, Brown and Murray all came together through a friend who had a full recording studio in his home because his mother was former back-up singer of Earth, Wind & Fire. This quartering, however, did not last long as a fallout ensued between the trio and the owner of the studio, who was accused of taking credit for the progeny produced by Wade, Brown, and Murray.⁴⁰⁹

Sarig notes that Wade, Brown and Murray’s collaboration found sanctuary with the help of Rueben “Big Rube” Bailey, a friend of Wade. Bailey’s father had died when he was young.

⁴⁰⁹ Roni Sarig, *Third Coast: OutKast, Timberland, and How Hip Hop Became a Southern Thing*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: De Capo Press, 2007), 116; Brown is known for his falsetto voice that is much like Curtis Mayfield whose voice is a mainstay in all forms of Atlanta’s black popular culture. He is the son of Jimmy Brown of the Atlanta soul band Brick.

Because Bailey had been a troubled student at East Point's Tri-Cities High School, his mother, who knew and respected Wade, invested a few thousand dollars from Bailey's father's insurance policy which allowed him to buy a MPC60 sampler machine, which kept Bailey occupied and out of trouble. Bailey donated the machine to the collaborative efforts with some other equipment from Brown, Wade and Murray. They set up a studio at Wade's small Delowe Gardens apartment in East Point. However, it was not long before Wade's mother and the neighbors complained that the production crew's progeny broke Atlanta City noise ordinances. With this, Wade found a room to rent at Jellybeans, a skate rink on the decline in the Ben Hill neighborhood, that served as a haven for black teens for gatherings and was the site where Atlanta's skating and dancing legends were made. At Jellybeans, Wade, Brown and Murray built a studio where artists met around the three. This collaborative effort formed a production team called Organized Noize, a name taken from the triad's plans to create a female group that never came into fruition. Brown's R&B background, pitted with Murray's Hip-hop prowess and Wade's integration and focus, made them a force to be reckoned with.⁴¹⁰

According to Sarig, when the studio at Jellybeans became difficult to keep with his family being threatened of eviction, Wade asked a favor of his most powerful acquaintance, the former personal bodyguard to Mayor Maynard Jackson and embattled Atlanta Police Chief Eldrin Bell. Bell helped Wade's family to relocate to an adequate and discrete place on Lakewood Terrace on Atlanta's Southside. With this, Organized Noize set up a studio in the house's unfinished basement, which they described as a crawl space with a dirty floor with

⁴¹⁰ Sarig, 117; According to Sarig, Jellybeans was the skate rink depicted in the movie *ATL*. He states that the original title for the motion picture was *Jellybeans*. Also, at this point, Organized Noize brought together the Uboyz, Big Rube, a group called Parental Advisory or P.A.; Big Gipp's group called the Chain Gang, with an East Point rapper named Frederick "Cool Breeze" Bell, and a rap duo called the Lumberjacks that consisted of Willie "Khujjo" Goodie and Robert Terrance "T-Mo" Barnett.

“vibes that were otherworldly.” As a result of the conditions of the space, the studio was called “the Dungeon” because of its red clay walls and overhead pipes that resembled a boiler room where artists rarely left.⁴¹¹ This space was the epicenter of a new movement and subgenre in rap music. Wade’s Lakewood Terrace home provided sanctuary for talented and aspiring artists to commune. A couple of this artists would prevail as the earliest voice of a southern movement in rap music and Hip hop culture.

Of the many aspiring artists who inhabited the “Dungeon,” OutKast were the first to make it to national and international acclaim as Hip Hop artists. Comprised of Andre Benjamin and Antwan Patton, OutKast, a rap duo that hailed from Atlanta met as sophomores at Tri-Cities High School in East Point, a section of Southwest Atlanta known to locals as the heart of the SWATs.⁴¹² They knew each other from school, however Sarig notes they forged their close-knit friendship while both taking the MARTA train to Buckhead’s Lenox mall. Bonding over music, while at the mall along with Patton’s brother James, they rode the MARTA back to East Point together and discussed the typical subjects of teenagers: school, music and girls. From this encounter, Andre called his father, with whom he lived with at the time, and asked if Antwan could spend the night. This was the start of a world-renowned friendship as the two combined common interests and rearing as well as different, yet complimentary qualities.⁴¹³

Born February 1, 1975 in Savannah, Georgia, Antwan Patton was the first child born to a teenaged mother Rowena Patton, yet subsequently raised by his maternal grandmother, Edna Mae Kearse amongst a host of other grandchildren. Patton’s family life benefited greatly from

⁴¹¹ Sarig, 118.

⁴¹² SWATs is short for Southwest Atlanta.

⁴¹³ Sarig, 120.

his extended family, as his aunts and uncles, and occasionally his father had a hand in his upbringing. Interestingly, Patton learned his street savior-fair from his teenaged uncles while in Savannah which is a major characteristic of his rap style and persona, as he is considered to be the player of the group. His musical influences included Kate Bush, Bob Marley, Gil-Scott Heron and gospel music, as well as his grandmother singing spirituals as a child. While in his early teens, his mother sent him to live with his Aunt Renee in Atlanta, seeking better educational opportunities for him. He was able to stay in Atlanta under the condition that he kept good grades. Patton graduated from Tri-Cities High School with honors in 1993.⁴¹⁴

Born on May 27, 1975 in Atlanta, Andre Lauren Benjamin was born to unwed parents as a result of a short lived relationship between his 19 year old mother Sharon Benjamin and his father, Lawrence Walker, a loan officer ten years Sharon's senior. With no intention to start a family, Benjamin's parents parted ways perpetually when he was a child. Later, his parents had joint custody, considering neither of his parents ever had anymore children. By age nine, Benjamin, self sufficient and comfortable in solitude, proved to his mother that he could stay at home alone while she worked the night shift at the General Motors plant. His personality was reflective and quiet; Andre had been exposed to some different elements early, as he is considered the poet of the group. At age 13, he got his first job working at the Apparel Mart in downtown Atlanta. His musical influences included Sly Stone, Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye, Gil-Scott Heron, Al Green and a host of gospel music. He favored rap artist such as Eric B. and Rakim, EPMD, Public Enemy Pete Rock and C.L. Smooth and KRS One. Benjamin did not finish high school in a traditional sense. Together, Antwan Patton, referred to as Big Boi and

⁴¹⁴ Maurice J. Hobson, *What Y'all Really Know About the Dirty South: Working Towards a Black Southern Aesthetic in Hip Hop Culture*, Presented at the Southern American Studies Association: Commencement de Siecle: American Culture for New Centuries, Atlanta, Georgia, 2001.

Andre Benjamin referred to as Dre, were known as “the Playa and the Poet”—OutKast.⁴¹⁵

However and more importantly, the lives of these two artists spoke to the shifting trends and tensions found in Atlanta from their births in the mid-1970s to the present.

Roni Sarig notes that in the mid-1980s, Benjamin’s mother Sharon, enrolled her son into Atlanta’s minority-to-majority busing program which gave “gifted” black students from lower performing schools and overwhelmingly black schools the opportunity to transfer to better-performing and overwhelmingly white schools. With this, Benjamin rode the bus daily from Southwest Atlanta to Buckhead’s Sarah Smith Elementary School and then to Willis A. Sutton Middle School. Though he missed going to schools with children from his neighborhood, Benjamin thrived at the Buckhead schools while also taking up hobbies that were inextricably linked to white suburbia such as skateboarding and rock music.⁴¹⁶

Though Patton had multifaceted talents, his interaction with Benjamin focused on Hip hop considering the times they focused on stealing cars from Old National Highway on Atlanta’s Southside. They also endured a stint at dealing marijuana but admittedly stopped as noted by Sarig for the reason they smoked the product before selling it. Subsequently, Benjamin landed a job at Foot Action in the Southwest Atlanta’s Greenbriar Mall while Patton worked at Foot Locker at the Underground Atlanta. By his junior year in high school, Benjamin had dropped out of Tri-Cities High School and took classes at Frank McLaren High School, an alternative school

⁴¹⁵ Ibid; See also Joshua Clover, “The Future of Funk,” *GQ Magazine*, December 2000, 168-175; See also Sarig, 120-121; What should be noted here is the fact that Patton and Benjamin have stage names as do many Hip hop artists. Their most common names to date are still Big Boi for Patton and Dre 3000 for Benjamin. However, they use other aliases. Patton is also known as Daddy Fat Sacks, General Patton, Sir Lucious Leftfoot, Billy Ocean, Hot Tub Toney and Francis the Savannah Chitlin’ Pimp. Benjamin is also known as Dre, Cupid Valentino, Ice Cold, Possum Aloysius Jenkins, Dookie Blossumgame III, Benjamin Andre, Love Pusher, Binhamin, Johnny Vulture, Funk Crusader, Chamelio Salamander, 3 Stacks, Sunny Bridges, and Andre 3k. For the sake of this chapter, I will call them Big Boi and Dre.

⁴¹⁶ Sarig, 121.

for youth who had jobs or children and wanted to get their Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED). Educationally, the two took different paths. However, they remained close friends through cultivating music and forging a rap duo initially named 2 Shades Deep. Yet, when it was learned that there was a group in Atlanta called 4 Shades Deep, they changed their names to the Misfits, not wanting to be like any other group. Misfits, however, did not capture their imagined persona and essence of the duo, and with the help of the dictionary they changed their names to OutKast, a phonetic spelling derived from outcast, defined as a person who has been rejected by society or a social group.⁴¹⁷ Benjamin and Patton attempted to establish something different than what the bi-coastal hegemony offered in Hip hop music and as such, their southern identity, unmeshed with the standards of Hip hop and marginalized found themselves with this name. According to Andre, “OutKast blended the feel of blues, the togetherness of funk, the conviction of gospel, the energy of rock, and the improvisation of jazz. With no intensions of disassociation from the music, Dre declared, “our music is different.....you listen to East Coast music, it’s got a kind of rhythm, You listen to West Coast, it’s got its own kind of rhythm. You listen to southern music, its got kind of like a bouncy feel to it. It’s soul. That’s what it is. It’s soulful music with more instrumentation.” L.A. Reid agreed, claiming that his prodigy “tapped into the ‘soul’ of ‘soul music’ remembering that their music had spirit, Southern spirit.”⁴¹⁸

By 1992, Benjamin and Patton felt ready to perform for a record label and solidify a deal. According to Sarig, a classmate of theirs from Tri-Cities High School knew Rico Wade. By then, Organized Noize had earned the notoriety as a newly emerging production company in Atlanta.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Alona Wartosfsky, “Dirty South Rides High in Hip-hop World: Rap Heading in New Direction,” *Florida Times-Union*, 15 March 2000, C/1; Sonia Murray, “Welcome Noize: Local Producing Trio Behind Big TLC Hit Puts a Positive Spin on its Brand of Rap that Revisits the Spirit of ‘60s Soul Sound,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 14 November 1995, D/1; See also Hobson, 2001; Darren E. Grem, “The South Got Something to Say,” *Southern Cultures*, Winter 2006.

As they auditioned for Wade, it was noticed that they did not imbibe the markings of typical Atlanta aspiring artists, seen as “ghetto Atlanta niggas with gold teeth,” but performed with a sound that had the stylistic likings of “Das EFX and Onyx,” established New York groups. As such, Benjamin and Patton rapped for twenty minutes over an instrumental to A Tribe Called Quest’s “Scenario.” The two went back and forth until out of breath and in the end, Wade asked them to accompany him to the Dungeon at Lakewood Terrace. Upon arrival to the recording studio, though younger than most of the other artists there, they blended in quickly. It seemed that this recording locale was crawling with artists, notepads, marijuana and malt liquor.⁴¹⁹

In the attempt to cash in on Atlanta’s coming popular culture that was to be, instead of a full album deal, Antonio “L.A.” Reid offered OutKast the opportunity to record a song for a 1993 LaFace Christmas album. Less than enthused, Benjamin and Patton saw this opportunity as Reid’s less than stellar attempt to appease Organized Noize. For those that grew up poor in the ghettos, the kind of merry Christmas associated with Holiday music was something unlive and therefore the group felt as if they could not convey. However, it was a chance to record and Wade encouraged them to write Christmas from their own experiences. As a result, OutKast created a song entitled “Player’s Ball” that would change Atlanta’s sound in particular and Hip hop’s sound in general forever.⁴²⁰

Roni Sarig asserts that “Player’s Ball” was an amalgamation of Hip Hop styles that blended early East Coast trends, West Coast funks and southern sensibilities and parlance. The Christmas theme found in “Player’s Ball” solidified OutKast’s credibility amongst a particular demographic amongst Atlanta’s black and poor. It was apparent that “Player’s Ball”

⁴¹⁹ Sarig, 124.

⁴²⁰ Sarig, 127-128.

demonstrated that Christmas Day, the epicenter of a holiday season marketed as a time where gifts are given and received, was no different than any other day to the poor in Atlanta, and to a larger degree, the world. The success of “Player’s Ball” pushed OutKast to regional and some nation-wide success, but more importantly it gave way to the production and release of their first album *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* (Southern Playalistic Cadillac Music) released the last week of April in 1994.⁴²¹

One of the aims of *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* in the formation of Atlanta’s identity as well as a southern identity in Hip hop was to show audiences outside of Atlanta, in particular, and the south, in general, what it was like in the city. It started an era that pushed southern hip-hop and rap as a full partner in the culture. With characteristics of East Coast and West Coast rap, *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* provided a mutated third strain of the other two, where the integration of sound and a reinvention for hip-hop.⁴²² The album’s strengths were that it provided a narrative to black and poor life in Atlanta by using identifiable southern standards such as dialect and proverbial maxims. It lent credence to new and emerging tensions and trends as seen through southern aesthetic, fashion, and bravado in regards to cars, clothes, and taste. Lastly, the album utilized numerous members of the Dungeon Family by addressing the events that effected black Atlanta life as seen in the areas of East Point, College Park and the SWATs with a somewhat of a hospitable southern swagger. However, OutKast’s release of *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* did more than for Atlanta; it solidified Organized Noize and the Dungeon Family as one of the early vanguards of southern rap.

⁴²¹ Sarig, 129-130; According to Sarig, the album title *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* was inspired by Memphis Soul singer Isaac Hayes’ “Hyperbolic syllabic sesquedalymistic” (Hyperbolic syllabic Sesque Daly Mistic).

⁴²² Sarig, 132-133.

In 1994, at Freaknik, an annual black college student event that took place in Atlanta in April just before the start of final exams, OutKast utilized a street team that greeted college students from across the nation with an album sample packaged with dice and incense. This was the way that the emerging group initially put their music out to a national audience. Locally, the group had resounding success. To Atlanta's overwhelmingly black southwest neighborhoods, OutKast's music put local landmarks on a national stage in terms of popular culture. Atlanta's high schools, thoroughfares, nightclubs, and businesses were often referenced in the music.⁴²³

Sarig notes that as OutKast successfully emerged, LaFace Records, Organized Noize and the Dungeon Family solidified their presence and a tertiary sub-culture in hip-hop. Organized Noize's next project was a new group called Goodie Mob, a group of the Dungeon Family's most promising lyricists. Goodie Mob, also hailed from Southwest Atlanta, although it started as a group of artists who worked well with Willie "Khujo Goodie" Knighton Jr. and Robert "T-Mo" Barnett, original members of The Lumberjacks, they later merged with their classmate from Benjamin E. Mays High School Cameron "Big Gipp" Gipp and younger schoolmate Thomas "Cee-lo" Callaway. Just as OutKast, Callaway had heard about Organized Noize's studio located in the dungeon and had impressed Wade, Brown and Murray with his skills as a lyricist as well as vocals. With this talent, he appeared on numerous songs on

Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik in both capacities.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ Sarig, 134; For context, see also Sharon Correa Toomer, "The Origins of Freaknik," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 24 April 1994, G/7. In this article, it explains that Freaknik started out as Freak Nic in 1982 as a result of the Washington, D.C. Metro Club at the Atlanta University Center—a social club established for the districts students attending AUC. In the 1982-83 academic year, the club's theme was a "Return of the Freak" from the dance called "the Freak" that was especially popular with the youth. Freaknik initially was created for students staying in Atlanta for Spring Break. It took place at Adams and Piedmont parks and morphed into a national event for black college students where some 60,000 students would converge on the city, congesting traffic and wreaking havoc. However, they spent in excess of \$15 million each weekend in the city.

⁴²⁴ Sarig, 135-136.

According to Sarig, Goodie Mob's emergence provided a complementary narrative to Atlanta as OutKast had done, while simultaneously bringing something that was more in tune with the soul of the city's streets.⁴²⁵ The name Goodie Mob bore witness to the experiences of black Atlanta's most vulnerable, its working poor, poor and homeless and lent credence to the group's motto where the "**Good die Mostly Over Bullshit.**"⁴²⁶ Their initial album *Soul Food* released on November 21, 1995, imbibed stylistic lyrics and melodic soul. As OutKast soliloquized southern streets, Goodie Mob's portrayed the experiences of blacks in the South, a land where their forefathers worked as chattel on the Old South's plantations. Goodie Mob's music challenged Atlanta's legacy as "City too busy to hate." *Soul Food*, according to Sarig, was a simmering anger and yearning to break out of the trap. It was, in a way that hip-hop had never been before, part blues and part gospel—from Callaway's pained wails to the aggression seen in the lyrics presented by Knighton. According to Miller, one of *Soul Food's* most successful songs was "Dirty South," a track that expropriated the negative markers of poverty, ignorance and violence of rural life that was often portrayed in images of the South and its hermeneutical fluidity in regards to southern history, of which its Achilles heel was race relations where blacks were complicit in the often subscribed Old South romance interpreted by white southerners in their lost cause of the Confederacy. "Dirty South" also linked the motifs of iniquities that had been seen along racial lines and practices, an understanding of Atlanta rarely exposed. To group member Robert Barnett, "Dirty South" asserted "the song portrays Atlanta as a racist stronghold where the confederate flag still waves for 'good ole boys and slavery'" Cameron Gipp, another member of the group asserted that "the symbols of slavery still stand in the South, and it's evidence that the mentality still lives....ain't too much changed; they just

⁴²⁵ Sarig, 137.

⁴²⁶ Goodie Mob, "Fighting," *Soul Food LP*, LaFace Records, 1995.

learned to make it look a little better.” In a documentary entitled *The Dirty South: Raw and Uncut*, Willie Knighton asserted:

It’s just dirty in the form of...racism,....it’s still the old prune-face ass white folk who still run the ATL...that’s what’s dirty about it, ‘cause they still run it....they run the ATL from the inside out....during the nighttime, the street is ours....during the daytime they got white folk coming from all over Roswell, I’m talking about Alpharetta, coming in just to run ATL out of these big buildings that they done fuck around and built downtown. That’s what dirty about it, you feel what I’m saying?”⁴²⁷

In this same documentary, Gipp called for the need for black economic empowerment with his connotations of the “Dirty South” asserting the need to “start controlling this [music] business and getting all the other folks up out of it. Lastly, Thomas Callaway asserted that “a great number of our black leaders....come right from the South, so, the South is the heartland....the South isa mother.”⁴²⁸ To historicize this, perhaps both Miller and Sarig’s cultural analysis should consider Atlanta’s history in the post Civil Rights context. There are some understandings of the South that are not always quantified by attempts to explicate the meanings of new developments in black culture but are linked by and large to the lived experiences of the people.

By 1996, OutKast had matured personally and creatively, where Benjamin showed significant signs of change. He had put down the vices of marijuana and alcohol referenced in *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* and had become a strict vegan. He wore dread hair, and while waiting for the excess growth to lock the hair, he took to wearing a turban much like Atlanta’s R&B icon Hannibal. This was seen by audiences as an increased sense of spirituality and eccentricity. Moreover, what was clear was that he showed himself as an individual and had somewhat distinguished himself from the rest of the Dungeon Family. Along with this, OutKast endured significant musical growth, making their own music, apart from Organized Noize. With

⁴²⁷ Sarig, 137; See also Miller 175-176; and Paul Hampel, “Music Spotlight Music,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 3 October 1996, 9.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

money earned from record sales, the group set out to create their own studio. From this, OutKast birthed a popular song that would lead their second album entitled *ATLiens*, released in August of 1996, after Atlanta hosted the Olympics. The track called “Elevators (Me & You)” showed as OutKast as taking more control over their music. This album asserted the group’s individuality with imagery—aliens, extraterrestrials—that reasserted OutKast’s distinctiveness and as they represented Atlanta apart from other forms of Southern Rap. According to Sarig, their music was untethered by regionalism; some aspects of it were from out of space.⁴²⁹ This asserts the music’s distinct sound and content and further embodies the marginal quality of an outcast.

The “Dirty South” genre served as a rallying cry for southern rap on southern terms. One of the original aims of Organized Noize was to identify talent that embodied southern aesthetic. Interestingly, the dynamics of black southern life morphed rap music and Hip hop culture into a sub-culture that was and is particular to the American South. It preyed upon a resilient tradition that is old as the American black experience, the oral tradition. Yet, negative markers associated with the sordid history of the American South such as racial injustices, miseducation, and economic hardship significantly informed the genre. As early as 1990 a new development in the history and culture of the black New South appeared in this a newly self-defined southern-style of rap music and Hip-hop culture. This particular movement, known as Dirty Southern rap, initially found credence amongst a southern audience. However, it impacted the genre as a whole later. At the center of this development were Atlanta based artists OutKast and Goodie Mob, who willfully used black southern standards such as dialect, sensuality and older genres found within black southern musical traditions to gain a foothold in a competitive but budding music industry. Enthusiasts felt that both OutKast and Goodie Mob brought forth the divers history and culture of post Civil Rights black Atlanta while steeped in the paramount cultural

⁴²⁹ Sarig, 141.

traditions still prevalent and seen throughout the African American experiences. As Atlanta developed into a global commercial center, it became very clear that OutKast and Goodie Mob's social commentary spoke to the social costs paid by the majority of black poor and homeless at the center of Atlanta's transformation. Hence, early forms of Dirty Southern rap music constituted an appropriate snapshot of the contrasting lifestyles between two black Atlantas. For the sake of the music, OutKast's Andre Benjamin and Antwan Patton will be referred to as Dre and Big Boi respectively; and Goodie Mob's Robert Barnett, Thomas Callaway, Cameron Gipp and Willie Knighton will be referred to as T-Mo, Cee-Lo, Big Gipp and Khujo respectively. The lives of these artists spoke to the shifting trends and tensions found in Atlanta from their births in the mid-1970s to 1996.

Player's Ball

Roni Sarig's characterization of OutKast's 1993 hit "Player's Ball" as a "synthesis of Hip-hop styles, meeting at the Atlanta crossroads: the mellow '70s funk that defined Dr. Dre's West Coast flavor, mixed with the rapid-fire lyricism of Native Tongues MCs, delivered with the slur and slang of southerners" works from the perspective and cultural analysis of an ethnomusicologist or literary critic by attributing the "Player's Ball" to musician Lightnin' Rod's 1973 album-length toast, *Hustler's Convention* and asserts that Christmas day was just as any other in Atlanta's ghettos.⁴³⁰ There may be some validity to this claim. However, in the original version of the song, the chorus, sung with Sleepy Brown's soulful falsetto voice, it states: "All the players came from far and wide. Wearing afros and braids, kicking them

⁴³⁰ Sarig, 129.

gangster rides. Now I'm here to tell you of a better day, when the player's ball is happening on Christmas day.”⁴³¹ In an interview conducted for the purpose of this dissertation research, it was acknowledged that the actual Player's Ball was the Hustler's Ball, a part an underground working class coalition uninvited to debutante parties and all the events catered by Atlanta's black upper and middle classes. From a historical perspective in regards to black Atlanta was that the annual Hustler's Ball was held at various hotels and hosted by the highly regarded Atlanta bookmaker Wesley Merritt. Merritt ran the illegal lottery in Atlanta known as “the bug” and credited as the most lucrative illegal gambling operation in the Southeast. He originally hailed from Spaulding County, Georgia with humble beginnings but made resident in the Summerhill community on Atlanta's Southside. Though he owned a lucrative and illegal business, he dressed in neatly pressed bibbed overalls with nice shoes, the clothes uncommon to the bravado of a stereotypical hustler. At every chance, he invested his proceeds in legal ventures such as real estate, nightclubs, pool halls and a motel. As he did numerous stints in jail for his illegal activity, he remained in the good graces of the police and politicians, attributed to their payoffs received from “the bug.” Evidence of this can be send during one of Merritt's prison stints where former Atlanta City Councilman Q.V. Williamson's real estate company handled his gambling property holdings and the Atlanta politician would occasionally free Merritt from jail to conduct his personal business. In 1971, Williamson used his authority to “sign out” Merritt from jail four times.⁴³²

⁴³¹ OutKast, “Player's Ball” [Original Version], *Southernplayalisticcadillacmuzik* LP, LaFace Records, 1994; Duly noted, the version of this song from the 1993 LaFace Christmas Album speaks specifically about Christmas day, whereas on *Southernplayalisticcadillacmuzik*, the last stanza of the course says “when the player's ball is happening all day everyday.”

⁴³² Jerry Roberts, interview by Maurice J. Hobson, Atlanta, GA, 31 October 2007; See also Mike Morris, “Former Numbers Kingpin slain—‘The Bug’ Made Wesley Merritt Rich, But It Led to Several Prison Terms,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 29 November 1995, B/4.

Merritt ran “the bug” with the most shrewd business practices. In the community, “the bug” involved thousands of bettors making 50-cent and \$1 bets at odds as much as 400 to 1. Players picked a three-digit number, and the winning combination was determined by each day’s final sales of stocks and bond on the stock market. His operation followed a pyramid scheme where runners, the lowest ranking employees, answered to the captains of middle management. The captains then answered to the lieutenants and the lieutenants answered to Merritt. Merritt had his employees working at all of the local hospitals, barbershops, hair salons and the General Motors automobile plant where in house captains worked. His operation was lucrative until 1993, when the state of Georgia initiated the Georgia Lottery under the pretenses to fund education, where legalized gambling crushed underground bookmaking to wane significantly. Merritt was killed in an attempted robbery by drug dealing corner boys in 1995 in his front yard with \$9,700 in cash on his person. At his funeral he was eulogized as “a good and passionate man where over a thousand agreed with shouts of amen and hallelujah.” Perhaps the best assessment of Merritt’s contribution to Atlanta’s black working class and poor communities was Deacon Clarence Mitchell asserted that Merritt was a “jack-‘em-up businessman, a jack like one you put under your car when you get a flat tire to jack it up which is what Wesley Merritt did for poor people who needed his help. The sentiment in some black communities was that Merritt’s “bug” never shot folks dead, never threw fire into babies’ bedrooms. Douglas Dean, the president of the Summerhill Neighborhood Association, declared “every black church in every black community has a Wesley. He gave back to his people because he had a heart.”⁴³³

⁴³³ Georgia Lottery Website, <http://www.galottery.com/gen/aboutus/messageFromPresident.jsp>; See also “Dave Kindred At Large,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 6, 1995, C/3.

Another story of Merritt showed his interest in helping students go to college and the numerous contributions to churches. In an interview, showing Merritt's commitment to education, it was stated that:

Benjamin Mays....if there was a student that was deserving of money to stay in school. Dr. Mays, we called him Buck Benny would write a little note and send it down on Martin Luther King Drive to Wesley and tell him he needed a couple of thousand dollars or something or whatever he needed and Wesley would put it in a #2 bag, that's a little brown bag and have one of his runners to carry it back to him [Mays]. That's how he helped to support the students at Morehouse. They [Mays and Merritt] had their understanding. These people [bookmakers] were just as concerned in the development of black children as the man that was Doctor so and so and Lawyer so and so. They might be more concerned, but they couldn't go out and sport it cause they [police] would ask where you got all this money from? But they were just as concerned, just as dedicated in raising their children.⁴³⁴

Once again, this shows Merritt as a complicated figure in the complicated worlds of black Atlanta.

Though modest, Merritt saved his bravado for an event that he hosted annually, his lavish Hustler's Balls or Player's Balls held at local Atlanta hotels. The fact that this signature event was held in Atlanta and idolized by Atlanta's Youth in the 1990s were inextricable. When the "crown jeweled" Marriott Marquis came to Atlanta as a result of urban renewal during 1960s, the Hustler's Ball was moved to the hotel. Before, it was held at clubs like the Poinciana on "Sweet Auburn" Avenue or at Dinkins' Plaza. But the Marriott provided a space for the annual swank affair, which was a grand and successful event where "everybody who was anybody went." It was quoted as "everybody was well dressed and well mannered and...it was fine food, no cutting, fine cigars to smoke and beautiful women to talk to. It was the event of the day and all the men who came were well endowed financially. All the top sergeants, captains, lieutenants all

⁴³⁴ Roberts, interview by Maurice J. Hobson, Atlanta, GA, October 31, 2007.

came and enjoyed itself.”⁴³⁵ Though there was trouble in finding evidence of this affair in local newspapers, the researcher bore witness to a Hustler’s Ball invitation and saw pictures from the event, as the interviewee worked for the racket. What was gleaned from these articles was that the event happened during the Holiday season and was the talk of the town amongst black Atlanta’s prosecutable business. In a historical perspective and with this evidence, it is irresponsible to discount the fact that OutKast, fashioning themselves with hustler qualities, named their first hit after one of black and working Atlanta’s grandest events hosted by Atlanta and the Southeast most prominent bookmakers. Perhaps this historical analysis lends credence to “Player’s Ball’s” introduction, where it was described as “a black man’s heaven!”⁴³⁶

Towards the Confederate Battle Flag

Though Sarig and Miller briefly touch on the ways in which the music of OutKast and Goodie Mob address issues surrounding the embodiment of progress and the commercial branding of the American South, their analyses lacked a historical and sociological understanding of the Georgia confederate state flag issue. Though there were many inferences that talked about the underlying themes surrounding Georgia’s racist past and present as seen through OutKast and Goodie Mob, there are two references found in OutKast’s *Southernplayalistccadillacmuzik* that speak directly to this issue. One of these references came in an interlude entitled “Welcome To Atlanta.” In this interlude, the scenario is descriptive of an airplane carrying passengers into the city of Atlanta. Atlanta’s Hartsfield International Airport is

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ OutKast, “Player’s Ball,” *Southernplayalistccadillacmuzik LP*, LaFace Records, 1994.

located in the Southwestern corner of the city. The speaker in this interlude, who is the captain of the plane, states:

This is your captain. We are now in our final descent into Atlanta-Hartsfield Airport. We'd like to welcome you to Atlanta. We have clear blue skies in Atlanta, which, by the way is the home of the Atlanta Hawks, the Braves and the Falcons. To the far left, you can see the Georgia Dome, which by the way still flies the confederate battle flag. Atlanta has been called the new Motown of the South and is the home of LaFace Records' Organized Noize Production. If you look to your far right you can see Decatur and below you to the right is East Point and College Park, home of the Red Dogs, Black Cats, and robbing crews; and home of the players, lacks and mother fucking OutKast.⁴³⁷

Readers can interpret this interlude as the captain declaring that with the arrival of OutKast in the music industry, understanding this music was hinged on understanding the landscape particularly the SWATs, the community that had much influence on the content of the music.

In another instance, the song entitled "D.E.E.P." from *Southernplayalisticcadillacmuzik* as well references the Confederate Georgia battle flag issue and gives voice to black political sentiments that can be seen in through the commercial branding of the American South at the behest of the Olympics and how Atlanta's black poor still struggled. In this, Dre declared:

....Oh step in my Cadillac, let's ride through the hood and why don't you roll your window down so you can see it real good. And take a look at all the pimps and all the pushers and the players that's living on w whim, thin ice and prayer. Oh and mayor, can I get a little backup. Please don't let them pussy motherfuckers put that flag up. But let me shut up cause they say we need dough, whenever the fuck our album come out in 1994.⁴³⁸

Clearly, these lyrics speak to the politically charged nature of Georgia's confederate flag, a symbol of oppression that was expected to greet the international community by southerners who held that symbol dear. It also underscores the politics of compromise in pursuit of "dough,"

⁴³⁷ OutKast, "Welcome to Atlanta," *Southernplayalisticcadillacmuzik LP*, LaFace Records, 1994; In 2003, after the death of Maynard Jackson to a massive heart attack, Atlanta's International Airport was renamed Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport for Jackson, who was responsible for the airport's growth and international stature.

⁴³⁸ OutKast, "D.E.E.P.," *Southernplayalisticcadillacmuzik LP*, LaFace Records, 1994.

reminding one of Du Bois' warning regarding pursuit of the golden apples. Dre did not set out to bring negative repercussions to local and state politicians as 2 Live Crew and NWA had done in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, the larger contest for Dre's commentary illustrates the historical underpinnings of OutKast's counter narratives.

Consider this for the historical synthesis. As Atlanta moved forward making preparations and concessions for the Centennial Games, the city, state, and region were forced to confront an issue that had long been a negative marker of white supremacy. In 1994, Atlanta's Georgia Dome played host to Super Bowl XXVIII, the championship game of the National Football League that pitted the National Football Conference champion Dallas Cowboys against the American Football Conference champion Buffalo Bills, a highly anticipated rematch of the 1993 championship game held at Pasadena, California's Rose Bowl. In the days preceding the event, Atlanta councilwoman Carolyn Long Banks, a native daughter of Atlanta and the Council's first black woman member raised the issue, wanting an explanation as to why Georgia flew the Old South most identifiable ideological symbol, the confederate battle flag', known in Georgia as the "stars and bars." The Georgia state flag flew atop local, state, and federal buildings. In Georgia, the "Navy Jack" designed stars and bars were added to the state flag in 1956 as retaliation to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown vs. Board of Education, which furthered the way for school integration. The flag generally represented the South's resistance to federal mandates for civil and political equality. Georgia was not the only state confronting its endorsement of racists' symbolism disguising it as "southern heritage." The neighboring states of Alabama and South Carolina, as well as Mississippi, Florida, and North Carolina were all embroiled in similar

issues surrounding their respective flags. To blacks in Atlanta, the Georgia Dome had been built on the “skull and bones” of the black community.⁴³⁹

On the Thursday prior to the Super Bowl, U.S. Representative and Civil Rights figure John Lewis blasted the National Football League and some local political leaders for not calling for the removal of the state flag from the Georgia Dome for the Sunday match. He stated, “People should stand up and say this is not in the best interests of our state or city. All elected officials should have the courage to put this issue behind us.” Lewis’s criticism asserted his concerns toward former Mayor Andrew Young, presiding Mayor Bill Campbell and Governor Zell Miller when the group told the media that attention should be focused on other matters. Former Mayor Maynard Jackson was exempted from this criticism because he removed the confederate Georgia banner from areas under the jurisdiction of City Hall and called a press conference and rejected the banner. In June of 1992, Jackson signed a City Council resolution supporting Governor Miller’s call to remove the Confederate battle flag from Georgia’s state flag. As a black mayor of a predominantly black city, Jackson not only knew but understood the racial antagonism the battle flag represented and that it was not a banner under which the diverse population of Georgia’s citizens could unite. As early as 1993, Gov. Miller, raised the idea of changing the flag before 1996, but squelched his proposal after it was met with intense opposition from the legislature. To bring attention to the centrality of the “stars and bars” and the showcasing of the Georgia Dome through Super Bowl XXVIII, Georgia Civil Rights activists, led by state Senator Ralph David Abernathy III of Atlanta, planned a noon march on the dome that Sunday to protest the flag. Meanwhile, Georgia’s two largest groups interested in preserving

⁴³⁹ Dick Williams, “You Gangsta, It’s the Taxpayers Being Dissed,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 20 January 1994; Russell Thompson, “Georgians Rally ‘Round Flag Change,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 11 June 1992, A/14. The “Navy Jack” represented the second Confederate Flag and was also used as an international symbol of white working class masculinity, representing the rebellious nature embodied for southern secession.

the Georgia Flag that donned the “stars and bars,” the Sons of the Confederate Veterans and the Heritage Preservation Association, made no plans to appear at the dome to express their right given by the First Amendment. Lee Collins, president of the heritage association stated, “Let Abernathy’s group lynch themselves. We’ve recommended our group stay away.” The issue surrounding the Confederate flag was another dress rehearsal for a critical discourse yet to unfold regarding the Olympics and Atlanta.

On February 23, 1994, Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium removed the Georgia state flag bearing the confederate symbol from atop the stadium and relegated the issue to by the Georgia Assembly as the city moved closer to the Olympiad. With Atlanta’s baseball stadium refusing to fly the flag, only the Georgia Dome, the largest stadium in the city, displayed it. Fulton County Commissioner Michael Hightower, a member of the Atlanta-Fulton County Recreation Authority responsible for the vote that took down the flag asserted that this decision was made with hopes that all minds be brought together as the city moved toward the 1996 event. However, Georgia lawmakers across party lines had mixed reactions to the removal of the flag from the stadium. In both parties, white lawmakers though it was “bad judgment” to remove the flag. Black political leaders, as well as those preparing the city for the Olympics praised actions taken at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. With this, they predicted that more venues and public buildings would take similar actions. The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) asserted that the flag was a political issue that transcended the Games, the Super Bowl, but embodied a long discourse of southern politics along race lines. As such, ACOG suggested that Georgia’s political leaders handle this matter. In a survey utilized to measure public opinion, slightly more than half of Georgians opposed changing the flag. Another survey in January of 1994 administered by Georgia State University’s Center for Urban Policy Research showed that black

support had waned since the spring of 1993, falling from 62 percent to 50 percent. For more dramatic affect, the decision by Stone Mountain Park officials to eliminate the playing of “Dixie” and images of the confederate battle flag in the park’s laser show was considered to be a seminal issue in the 1994 governor election. Because of Miller’s stance toward the flag and his endorsement of Bill Clinton in 1992, he prevailed as Governor for the second time with the slimmest margin in Georgia history, receiving 51 percent of the votes to 48.95 percent of the votes received by his opponent Guy Millner, the difference in the votes being a mere 32,555 votes.⁴⁴⁰

As Atlanta moved towards the Olympics, the flag issue heated once more as this time it involved not only blacks, whites, southerners, and northerners; but international relations in the form of world class athletes, diplomats and potentates. Also, the threat of protest by African American athletes had far reaching ramifications well beyond politics and into the realm of economics and sports. Unless U.S. District Judge Orinda Evans issued a temporary injunction forcing removal of the flag from public buildings, then decided to hear a lawsuit alleging that changes to the flag in 1956 were intended to promote segregation, sports pages would be dominated with extensive analyses of America’s most glaring social ill. Morality and conscience would supplant terms such as salary cap and free agency. Allegations of racism and self-righteousness would compete with the Dream Team III for prime play and witty headlines and Team USA’s cache of gold would be tarnished by the unprecedented exposure of America’s greatest embarrassment.⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴⁰ Susan Lacetti and Michelle Hiskey, “The Flag Flap—Banner Won’t Fly at Stadium—Board Removes it until Legislature Resolves Issue,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 24 February 1994, G/3; Dick Williams, A Stand for Dixie on Stone Mountain, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 27 August 1994, A/16; Chris Grant, *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*: “Zell Miller,” Georgia Humanities Council, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005

⁴⁴¹ Ailene Voisin, “Games Loom, Yet Stars and Bars Issue Simmer,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 21 February 1995, E/2.

Though not yet selected, black American athletes were sure to protest if the Confederate version of the Georgia state flag were too fly atop venues in which they were to compete. Atlantans and former Olympians Teresa Edwards and Katrina McClain were monitoring the matter as well as representatives of the Black Coaches Association and National Basketball Association Players Association who held sentiments of disappointment, anger, and surprise. Charles Grantham, the executive director of the NBA's union stated "This is 1995! Why are we even talking about this? I thought we'd moved beyond this type of thing. But I think that other black Americans would concur when I say that the [stars and bars] clearly symbolize segregation and racism." Two time Olympic coaching assistant George Raveling also anticipated some forms of civil disobedience. He thought that players might wear black armbands, remain in locker rooms while the national anthem was played, or worse boycott the games altogether. Raveling stated, "first and foremost, the flag should always be a symbol that generates enormous pride in yourself, your team and your country. I remembered when I'd watch the Olympics, long before I coached, I'd envision myself receiving the gold medal, filled with pride, tears in my eyes. Thus, the fundamental issue here is this: Why would anyone want a state flag that offends a percentage of this population and precludes that feelings of pride?" Raveling further suggested this litmus test: "Imagine you are a black American, on the victory stand, gold medal slung around your neck. With hand on heart, you hear the national anthem and watch as the American flag is raised. This is your grandest moment, your emotions spilling over. But yards away flies a flag that symbolizes much of what you and your ancestors have overcome, slavery and racism. How would you feel?"⁴⁴²

In the days just before the opening ceremonies, 20 protesters carrying confederate Georgia state flags gathered in front of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* building to condemn the

⁴⁴² Ibid.

newspaper and the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games for what they said were efforts to ban the flag from Olympic venues. The group was led by staunch segregationist and former governor Lester Maddox, who also cited the newspaper's editorial policy advocating removal of the St. Andrew's Cross, considered the Confederate battle emblem, from the flag, and ACOG's decision not to include flag pins in its collections of Olympic pins. While protesting, the former statesman Maddox carried a sign that read, "You Too Can Become a South Hater. Simply Join ACOG Leaders and the Atlanta Constitution and Oppose the Georgia Flag."⁴⁴³ Once again, the narrow mindedness of southern politics before civil rights reared its ugly head, only to show itself as outdated and ignorant.

"Git Up! Git Out!," Towards the City Government and Black Popular Political Sentiment

OutKast's song entitled "Git Up, Git Out," ["Get Up, Get Out"], the song's phonetic spelling result from the pronunciation derived from black southern parlance] perhaps may be the most intelligible critique of Atlanta's glaring social ills more often seen amongst black Atlanta's poor and homeless. The collaboration between OutKast and Goodie Mob lent credence to the struggles seen by Atlanta's poor and underclass and gave details to a myriad of issues that ranged from truancy to voter inclusion. The song had good balance and included two verses rapped by Goodie Mob's Cee-lo and Big Gipp, as well as both members of OutKast. As part of the counter narrative, Cee-lo croons the chorus:

You need to get up, git out and git something. Don't let the days of your life pass by.
You need to git up, git out and git something. Don't spend all your time trying to get high.
You need to git up, git out and git something. How will you make if you never

⁴⁴³ "Your Daily Update on Olympic News—Atlanta Games 13 Days—Olympic in Brief—Flag Fans Target ACOG, Paper, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, C/4.

even try? You need to git up, git out and git something. Cause you and I got to do for you and I.⁴⁴⁴

Because of the songs content, the radio version of the song was and is still widely used at activities centered around youth because of its message against apathy, high school drop out and crime. However in a very bold and striking fashion, Big Gipp's verse calls out Atlanta's black leadership. Gipp voiced these words:

....I had Jamaica's best [marijuana] and when I light it up, I hear a voice in my head [You got to git up, git out and git something]. Now I know it's on. My day is finally started. Back up in my crib, eat my grits, break out quick in my slick '84 sedan Deville [Cadillac] steady bouncing out to the point to Campbellton road. The valley of that Southside flow. Everybody know about that killer that we call blow [heroin]. So keep your eyes peeled for the cobra unit cause they known for jumping out of black Chevy trucks and through the fog. Here come the Red Dogs. I'm busting out around the corner in my Hog.* Dipping in an area, I'm scared. So one of these bitches might wind up dead. Cause I have no time for jail. Fuck Clampett cops! Fuck Elgin Bell! And crooked ass Jackson, got the whole county. Thinking that my city is the big lick for '96. '94, Big Gipp, Goodie Mo, OutKast, a vision from the past. Hootie Hoo [a call that signifies that the Red Dog police are coming].⁴⁴⁵

It is clear here that Gipp's account detailed drug trafficking still very prevalent as the city of Atlanta went through olympification. Gipp voiced fears of the undercover cobra units and the Red Dog police, whose primary purpose was to purge Atlanta's streets of drugs, vagrants and other "undesirables." The excessive force used by City hall enforcers influenced Gipp's description. Unlike their parent's generation that adored black politicians such as Jackson, Atlanta's new black youth rebuked not only Maynard "crooked ass" Jackson, but also Police Chief Eldrin Bell, President Bill "Clampett" Clinton, Mayor Bill "Clampett" Campbell.

⁴⁴⁴ OutKast featuring Cee-lo and Big Gipp, "Git Up, Git Out!," *Southernplayalisticcadillacmuzik LP*, LaFace Records, 1994; * Hog is a southern colloquialism for Cadillac sedan Deville.

⁴⁴⁵ OutKast featuring Cee-lo and Big Gipp, "Git Up, Git Out!," *Southernplayalisticcadillacmuzik LP*, LaFace Records, 1994.

In his third term in office, it was clear that Maynard Jackson was not perceived as the same man elected in 1973. Among the youth, there was a sense that the established leadership was out of touch. Jackson had left office in 1982 under what was perhaps the darkest chapter in the city's history, the missing and murdered children of Atlanta. Most of the Atlanta's youth, students and these rap artist all fell into the age bracket most severely effect by the serial killer[s] rampage on the city. Particularly, the artists, all black males, from Atlanta's southwest side, embodied the characteristics of those hunted as prey. Perhaps the displacement of the poor, destitute and disfranchised along with the influences that shaped the popular political sentiments of Atlanta's youth, as seen through Atlanta's Hip Hop, manifested itself most clearly on April 30, 1992 when hundreds of young blacks shattered storefront windows, looted downtown stores, and brutalized lone whites near the Henry Grady statue on Marietta street in downtown Atlanta. The riot contradicted the harmonious image championed for and protected by Atlanta's city leaders and businessmen. For several hours, downtown Atlanta belonged to the mobs. It was a reversed picture of the Atlanta race riots of 1906 to some extent, but this time young blacks vented their rage by assaulting any white person in sight. This wrath was stirred by a jury verdict handed down in Los Angeles, clearing four police officers of brutality charges in the beating of black motorist Rodney King. A novice video tape of the thrashing of King shown on national television for months had elevated the black expectations for a speedy conviction, yet an acquittal of the four police officers sparked riots nationwide.⁴⁴⁶

Responses from City Leadership

⁴⁴⁶ Gary Pomerantz, *Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn: A Saga of Race and Family*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 534.

In Atlanta, nearly one thousand students from the Atlanta University as well as black youths from the housing projects near the campus rampaged through downtown Atlanta, confronted by about 100 police decked out in riot gear with several hundred National Guard troops on standby, ordered by Gov. Zell Miller to protect “the lives of innocent people and the protection of public and private property.” Youths from the Atlanta Housing Authority and Atlanta University Center students alike felt that a deep sense of anger gripped the black community because the city’s black leadership had been unresponsive to the community and that their message of non-violence applied to a different time and place.⁴⁴⁷

At the time of the unrest surrounding the King Verdict, Atlanta’s Police Chief Eldrin Bell was vacationing in St. Thomas U.S. Virgin Islands. Because he was inaccessible, Deputy Chief Julius Derico, along with Jackson, began planning a strategy to quell the unrest. Of the downtown place ransacked were the Downtown Macy’s on Peachtree Street and Underground Atlanta, both shopping attractions in the area. To Atlanta city officials, the city was attempting to be patient with the youths. However, destroying public and private property would hurt the city’s image towards progress and the Olympic spirit. With this, Fulton County Police in riot gear surrounded the county government buildings and heavily armed state troopers, Georgia Bureau of Investigation agents and MARTA police lined the Five Points MARTA station making downtown Atlanta a full police state under martial law. To maintain order, Jackson enacted a citywide curfew imposed from 11pm to 5am on the first night. On the first day of the unrest, more than 320 people were arrested, most of them in their teens or early 20s and most charged with disorderly conduct or obstructing an officer. These arrests swelled the incarcerated

⁴⁴⁷ Jack Warner and Bill Montgomery, “Uneasy Calm Settles Over City in Wake of a Day of Unrest National Guard on Standby as Police Ring AUC Campus, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1 May 1992.

population in Atlanta to 1,154—more than double its capacity of 521. At least 41 people, many of them police officers, reporters and photographers were treated at hospitals for minor injuries. One Stone Mountain businessman was in critical condition with head wounds. Interestingly, then-Councilman Bill Campbell felt as if the police responded accordingly and promptly, but felt that no one anticipated that Atlanta would react with this kind of violence. He stated “we have a black administration. We have a black police chief. We have a black judicial system. It’s hard to comprehend.”⁴⁴⁸ Again, this kind of aloofness speaks to the reasons that Atlanta’s black youth felt as if the city’s political leadership had rejected its poor black constituency.

On the second day of unrest, Atlanta’s police waged a daylong confrontation with about 200 Atlanta University students intent on marching on downtown Atlanta. Police attempted to disperse the crowd with tear gas and students responded by hurling bricks and stone at police. Sixty-eight were arrested and the 11pm curfew imposed by Jackson on Thursday was reissued for Friday night. Police Chief Eldrin Bell, back from his Caribbean vacation asserted that “we will not tolerate in this city the unrest and the kind of violence we have seen.” To enforce this, he ordered the police helicopters to monitor the city. Jackson attempted to conduct business as usual but was interrupted with the frequent updates by Bell. Jackson maintained that he understood the anger and rage felt by Atlantans, but asserted that disturbance would not be tolerated. Jackson stated “We love and respect the student over there [AUC], but there are some who are misguided and think that can take the law in their own hands and they cannot do that....we will not tolerate lawlessness in any form.” Jackson, a Morehouse alum accustomed to winning crowds over with his enthusiastic speeches, knew that he did not have the solution to the

⁴⁴⁸ Douglas A Blackmon and Kathy Struggs, “After the King Verdict: Atlanta Reacts Too Slow? Violence Not Halted for Hours, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1 May 1992, A/1; See also Janice White Sikes Rogers, interview conducted by Maurice J. Hobson, Atlanta, GA, 7 September 2007; Jack Warner, “The Anger Spills into Atlanta; Downtown Will be Secure Today, Mayor Promises,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1 May 1992, A/1.

problems of racial discrimination but recommended that they learn to fight injustice with “the ballot, the buck and the book,” urging students to vote, to use economic leverage and to concentrate on school. This advice was not well received by students who felt as if Jackson had labeled their unrest as trivial and was dismissive. In an attempt to suppress student activity, police continued to guard the perimeter of Clark Atlanta’s campus as throughout the weekend. As a result of the policing of the campus, students were warned against public assembly and such gatherings were considered unruly and actions would be taken by authorities. Several meetings between Clark Atlanta President Thomas Cole and City Hall worked to ease tensions. Cole asserted that the students felt “violated” when hundreds of riot police stormed the peaceful campus. This tactic was to keep students isolated so that they would not add to the growing mob in the downtown area. Cole and Bell differed on view points greatly and in a haughty fashion, Chief Bell stated, “I certainly don’t think all students ought to be lumped into this.....because some hoodlums in the community got caught up in the emotion. In hindsight, we would change one or two things but no parent had to bury a child this morning, and I’m pleased with that.”⁴⁴⁹ To the students, these statements by Bell were insensitive. Bell’s haughtiness added to the discourse of Atlanta’s city officials’ unresponsiveness.

As classes convened classes and students prepared for final exams on Monday, May 4, 1992, AUC students circulated petitions the prior Sunday calling for a boycott of the first day of final exams because of the city government’s “unending oppression.” Clark Atlanta President Cole urged faculty to be “compassionate and lenient” with students who missed exams in the wake of the unrest. In the meantime,, AUC student leaders met with Mayor Jackson and Police Chief Bell, where the mayor refused to apologize for police actions at the college complex. Cole

⁴⁴⁹ Alma E. Hill, “America Reacts: Who’s Involved in Atlanta: Mayor Making Students His Priority,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 2 May 1992, A/12; Beverly Shepard and Robert Vickers, “In the Aftermath of Violence Campus Leadership Eases Tensions,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 3 May 1992, D/1.

had been critical of the police response at the AUC. The petition circulated called for a boycott of Monday finals and all non-black-owned businesses in protest of the “unending oppression endured at the hands of the city’s government.” Chief Bell defended the performance of his officers and asserted that officers “were going about their normal business.” Bell stated, “Yes, we used tear gas but in my estimation as commander, tear gas is a lot more human than billy clubs or bullets. We are pleased that no parents had to come and visit their child in the intensive-care wards in Atlanta. There had been enough finger-pointing and certainly enough blame to go around with regard to what occurred. Jackson refused the students’ request for an apology because he felt as if “the students owed him an apology too.”⁴⁵⁰ By all of accounts gathered through interviews, tear gas was perhaps the most dehumanizing measure used by the police on the students. What can be assumed is that Jackson’s request for an apology was prevalent because he thought that the demonstrators’ attempt to tarnish Atlanta’s downtown movement to prepare the city for the Olympics. Evidence of this is seen through the abundance of phone calls to the mayor from local business elites including the white business leaders underscoring their support for the Jackson administration in handling the crisis.⁴⁵¹

Responses from Community Activists

In the larger community and in an effort to restore peace in Atlanta, the King Center and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference went in to action with conference calls, rallies,

⁴⁵⁰ Bill Rankin and Gail Hagans, “Student Urge Boycott of Exams: Jackson and Bell Defend Police,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 4 May 1992, A/1.

⁴⁵¹ Alma E. Hill, “America Reacts: Who’s Involved in Atlanta: Mayor Making Students His Priority,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 2 May 1992, A/12. Explain why non-violence is not equal to civil disobedience.

petition drives and strategy sessions. Dr. King's widow, Coretta Scott King spoke with Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley about lending assistance of three nationally known staff members with law enforcement training expertise. Perhaps the best known was Captain Charles Alphin, who had conducted dozens of non-violent, law enforcement training seminars for the King Center and worked with police in Atlanta, New York, St. Louis and Miami. Mrs. King stated, "We want to teach people in the community and police officers how to manage conflict. We have a track record that says it worked."⁴⁵² Mrs. King's offer to Bradley was premature as she did not predict the unrest that would hinder Atlanta's day-to-day operations throughout the days following the riot.

In its non-violent fashion, Reverend Joseph Lowery, head of the SCLC, led a crowd of 300 people in prayer and song claiming that the acquittal of the four white police officers "ought to be a wake-up call" to America surrounding instances of prejudice. Even as Rev. Lowery urged civil disobedience, Fulton County Commissioner and son to the slain Dr. King, Martin Luther King III along with Mayor Jackson urged restraint because protest around Atlanta had the potential of turning into violent outbursts. The rally at the King Center was a sharp contrast to the demonstration at the near City Hall. The predominantly black crowd on Auburn Avenue exchanged hugs, prayed and linked arms while singing the traditional non-violent theme music of "We Shall Overcome."⁴⁵³ This method reflective of the 1960s seemed problematic to youth groups.

⁴⁵² Cynthia Durcanin, "Atlantans Lend A Hand to Los Angeles Mayor Bradley: King Center, SCLC Called on for Support," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1 May 1992, A/7.

⁴⁵³ Ibid; See also Janice White Sikes Rogers, interview by Maurice J. Hobson, Atlanta, GA, 7 September 2007.

From the Mouths of Babes

The manners in which Atlanta's youth addressed civil unrest when faced with the King verdict and in the face of Atlanta city officials were indicative of youth vigor. They wanted results and they wanted them quickly, a part of their youthful "by any means necessary" approach. To the youth, the administrations of Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson and former Mayor Andrew Young were criticized for not transforming their political success in attracting business in a way to help the poor. However, the youth in Atlanta took matters one step further and those at the AUC aligned with faculty to assert their views about Jackson. Many of them denounced the "bankrupt black political leadership." The shared sentiment amongst students as well as Atlanta's youth singled out Jackson, Dr. Louis Sullivan, the secretary of Human Services in Washington, as well as Reverend Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, stating that they had grown fat and complacent." However, students did pay homage to the earlier leadership provided by these three.⁴⁵⁴

Other students at Spelman College met and discussed the broader issue behind the King verdict—economics, social justice and racism. Many students of the post Civil Rights generation saw the same images as the Civil Rights generation, police in riot gear. Students were tired of being advised by politicians who alienated many of them. One student was quoted as saying, "People like Maynard Jackson don't know where we're coming from. Maynard Jackson lives in Buckhead, What does he know about the brothers on the streets? How often does he visit campus?" From a more radical perspective, former Black Panther Willie Ricks, who changed his name to Mukasa and was a fixture at Morehouse, encouraged the more militant

⁴⁵⁴ Jack Warner, "Atlanta Reacts: The Rodney King Verdict: Students Urged to Rechannel their Outrage Advice as Plentiful as the Speakers, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 5 May 1992, C/3.

students to take a more radical stance. Mukasa's view was widely appealing to students because many of them believed that his approach spoke to the common man. However, the medium that had the most widespread appeal was rap music. It was noted that "to many of the youth, Rap was the CNN to young black America and replaced the civil rights establishment. Students were more likely to respond to Chuck D of Public Enemy and Ice Cube, artist with an uncompromising eye on social, economic and political justices."⁴⁵⁵ It is for this reason that in the next two years, the emergence of OutKast and Goodie Mob added to the discourse provided by youth culture that critiqued Atlanta's city government in the wake of the Rodney King Riots. OutKast and Goodie Mob's lambasting of Eldrin Bell proves to be ironic considering that it was Bell who placed Rico Wade in the house on Lakewood Terrace that cultivated Organized Noize and the Dungeon Family. In no way is this to invalidate Atlanta's rap music movement's social critique and commentary of the city, but Gipp's verse not only gives a glimpse into the relationships between Atlanta's black political leaders and poorer black constituency, it also shows the short political memory of Atlanta's youth.

In a subsequent verse to "Git Up! Git Out!," Dre voices other issues pertinent to street corner conversations in regard to black political empowerment. Dre declared in the last verse of the song:

Y'all telling me that I need to get out and vote, huh? Why? Ain't nobody black running but crackers. So, why I got to register? I'm thinking of better shit to do with my time. Never smelled aroma of diploma, but I write the deep ass rhymes. So let me take you way... back to when a nigga stayed in Southwest Atlanta-A.....⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵ Cynthia Durcanin and Keith L. Thomas, "Students Turn to Their Own, Brush Aside Black Leadership's Old Guard," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 2 May 1992, A/1.

⁴⁵⁶ OutKast, "Git Up! Git Out!," *Southernplayalisticcadillacmuzik LP*, LaFace, 1994.

Though the verse goes on to talk about Andre's experiences that led to his high school drop out status and involvement in petty crimes, perhaps this statement was aimed directly at Maynard Jackson due to a number of events that were at the center of black voting.

To Atlanta's youth, Maynard Jackson's assertion that black voting prowess would eradicate many of the social ills as seen by Atlanta's poor blacks were fraudulent. This was so not only because he and former Mayor Andrew Young were unsuccessful in transforming their political victories to attract businesses to help the poor, but the Voter Education Project in Atlanta went out of business due to a lack of funding. Between 1970 and 1992, Atlanta's population had dwindled from 495,000 to 394,000 as middle-class blacks and whites fled the city to the suburbs where few blacks lived in the 1970s. The onus of the Voter Education Project's downfall was attributed to black politicians and the black middle class, those who had benefited the most from the progress of the organization with their elections being made possible. The blame was based on the fact that these groups failed to provide money to keep the VEP going after the foundation left for the suburbs. When Jackson returned to politics in 1989 and won a third term as mayor, though his oratory was still captivating, his black constituency complained that his priorities had changed and he had become a tool of the white business interests. Jackson and Young's negotiations with developers resulted in business opportunities for black professionals, but none of the largesse trickled down to the poor. According to some black leaders in Atlanta, "the civil rights movement turned out to be one of the worst things that ever happened to the black community where the dream of Martin Luther King became a nightmare because it resulted in white businessmen becoming richer and blacks becoming poorer."⁴⁵⁷ This perspective towards gains acquired as a result of civil rights is inaccurate. What cannot be

⁴⁵⁷ Kris Jensen, "The Newsstand, The Verdict: U.S. Still Wrestling with its Conscience," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 5 May 1992; See Jack E. White, "The Limits of Black Power," *Time Magazine*, 11 May 1992.

discounted are the legal barriers removed as a result of legislation, court decision and executive orders. Though civil rights did not solve many of the problems in regards to social blight, it did change black America. However what should be considered is the impact of class within the black community as a result of the role of civil rights and the weakening of black communities nationwide.

As Jackson pushed politics as the salvation of black America, he noted that black turnout in the 1992 presidential primaries had fallen significantly as compared to 1988's. Jackson went on record stating, "I think we are in a business at the ballot box. We're sitting on the means of our economic and social liberation and not using the power we have." Nevertheless, political pundits pointed out the fact that poor blacks went to polls in record numbers to help blacks get elected, but became discouraged after the unresponsiveness of the triumphant candidate. This can be attributed to black politicians will to satisfy the demands of businessmen, including blacks, who returned the political favors for campaign contributions. Even Atlanta Congressman John Lewis noted that "a segment of black leadership has gotten wrapped up in deal making that they've forgotten the people who elected them."⁴⁵⁸ Therefore Andre's words in this verse speak to the discouragement experienced by Atlanta's poor voters. His expression lends credence to the marginality of black life under Black political power.

Much of Atlanta's youth, whether student or citizen, found Maynard Jackson's attitude ambivalent. They saw him as a politician that put on a show for the cameras while a crisis loomed over the city. During Jackson's visits to the Atlanta University Center campuses, he talked more of how his whole family grew up on the campus but did not address the reasons that

⁴⁵⁸ Jack E. White, "The Limits of Black Power," *Time Magazine*, 11 May 1992; Also, blacks turned out in unprecedented numbers in the 1988 Democratic Primary because Civil Rights leader Jesse Jackson ran for President as a Democratic candidate.

the Atlanta Police, Georgia Bureau of Investigation and state police terrorized the city. This, along with his failing health, would prove to be a defining moment in his decision later to forego his second set of consecutive terms in office and paved the way for city councilman Bill Campbell to fulfill the seat.

Towards the Dirty South

Goodie Mob's release of the song "Dirty South" not only created the battle cry for southern MCs, it also coalesced some of the issues experienced by the poor as a result of "Olympification." The song brings together a look at Atlanta's aforementioned "Red Dog Unit," created in 1988 by then Public Safety Commissioner George Napper under the pretense of purging the streets of rampant drug activity and violence as a result of the emergence of crack cocaine. Interestingly, with Atlanta winning of the 1988 Democratic National Convention, its vying for the XXVIII Super Bowl and the 1996 Centennial Olympiad, it was not far reaching to surmise that Atlanta's City Government formed this special unit to help the city's facelift.

The song opens with an interlude entitled "Red Dog" which foreshadows the song and re-enacts a drug sale, where an undercover agent named "Straight Shooter" beats on the doors of a trap house⁴⁵⁹ and requests that the dealers inside "hit [him] three times." After the transaction is complete, "Red Dog" police swarm the place and kick in the door ordering all inhabitants get face down on the floor as they enter the house with guns drawn, cocked and loaded. It is at this point where it becomes clear that "Straight Shooter" is a narcotic agent.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁹ The trap house is a term that connotes a house where drugs are sold or used. It is called a trap because it has only one entrance and exit.

⁴⁶⁰ Goodie Mob, "Red Dog," *Soul Food LP*, LaFace Records, 1995; Hobson, 2001.

In the first stanza of the course, Cool Breeze, a member of the Dungeon Family declared:

One to the two the three the four/Them dirty Red Dogs done hit the door/And they got everybody on they hands and knees/And they ain't gon' leave until they find them keys [kilos of cocaine].⁴⁶¹

The interlude sets the stage from which numerous interpretation of the Dirty South can be derived but goes directly into the song “Dirty South.” The factual components of Atlanta’s illicit drug trade are very prevalent here. Cool Breeze then goes on to rap:

“Now if dirty Bill Clinton fronted me some weight. Told me keep two, bring him back eight. But I only brought him five and stuck his ass for three. Do you think that Clampett will sick his goons on me.”⁴⁶²

In this, Cool Breeze lays out a scenario where the government, the believed primary perpetrator in the drug trade, is duped by Atlanta hustlers. He does this in an attempt to predict repercussions by the establishment that must be done clandestinely because widespread knowledge of the government’s dealing of illegal drugs and guns is irresponsible, hypocritical and an overt form of corruption. The references to President Bill “Clampett” Clinton and Mayor Bill “Clampett” Campbell spoke to several sentiments held by Atlanta’s black poor constituency towards local and national leaders but is centered on the idea of urban renewal and gentrification. Conjuring Clinton’s name spoke to the involvement of white business and political elites through neo-liberalism manifested by Atlanta’s “Olympification.” Conjuring “Jed Clampett,” a character in the 1960s television series the Beverly Hillbillies, reflects inconsistent historical characters of the South, suggesting that southerners were backwards hill people. Clinton, the Arkansas governor turned American President, who achieved national political prominence while Atlanta’s rap scene was on the rise; lent credence to both stereotypes of “good ole boys of the old South

⁴⁶¹ Goodie Mob, “Dirty South,” *Soul Food LP*, LaFace Records, 1995.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

and a celebration of capitalists, non-racist “New South.” Clinton seemed to embody complicated southern identities that included both southern blacks and whites.⁴⁶³

Atlanta Olympics and Displacement

Perhaps the most thwarting component in regards to the “Olympification” of Atlanta was the displacement of the poor and homeless people in order to make the city seem user friendly for visitors. Not only did this component lack the camaraderie embodied by the Olympic Spirit, it was considered by many, wealthy and poor, black and white alike to be immoral and unethical. The story of Atlanta and the Centennial Olympiad exposed the shame and revelation as a result of boosting false images to the world. However, the “real” Atlanta and its poverty were seen by the world press and visitors behind the new construction. The city was amongst the nation’s poorest. “Real” Atlanta lay behind the new homes that lined main streets of poor, black inner city neighborhoods like Summerhill, the neighborhood where Olympic Stadium was erected. The new houses lined the way to the stadium. Also, just behind the façade of a new city, Atlanta’s homeless slept outside and while trying to avoid arrest. In order to limit the visibility of poverty, planners and developers used the city government to control the apparent need for additional low-cost housing by convincing Atlantans that the homeless of the city were not deserving of housing but were social deviants and criminals better off in jail.⁴⁶⁴

Goodie Mob, whose prowess as an Atlanta rap group centered on capturing the experiences of Atlanta’s downtrodden, critically assessed the mechanisms that used race, class

⁴⁶³ Hobson, 2001, Miller, 183.

⁴⁶⁴ Anita Beaty, *Atlanta’s Olympic Legacy: Background Paper*, Center on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2007, 5-6.

and geo-political economic control to further marginalize the poor and homeless by hosting the Olympics. Goodie Mob's song entitled "Cell Therapy" grappled with the acceleration and the completion of gentrification projects of neighborhoods in order to confiscate downtown property that developers wanted while incarcerating the visible homeless. The demonizing of Atlanta's poor and homeless by the white business elite over the black city administration served as the prevailing shapers of public policy. In light of this, Cee-lo voiced:

Me and my family moved in our apartment complex. A gate with the serial code was put up nest. The claim that this community was so drug free, but it don't look that way to me. 'Cause I can see the young bloods hanging out at the sto' [corner store]. 24/7, junkies looking for a hit of the blow [heroin], it's powerful. Oh you know what else they trying to do is make a curfew especially for me and you. The traces of the New World Order, time is getting shorter. If we don't get prepared people its gon' [going] to be a slaughter. My mind won't allow me to not be curious. My folk don't understand so they don't take it serious. But every now and then, I wonder if the gate was put up to keep crime out or to keep our ass in."⁴⁶⁵

Cee-lo's verse in this song speaks to the construction of zones created by numerous projects of importance. Two of these movements were of paramount precedence; yet one was an underground movement that allowed the experiences of black Atlantans to be assessed through Cee-lo's parlance. The first movement was a joint effort between the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the Atlanta Organizing Committee (AOC) which worked to get the city ready for the Games. The second movement was the Atlanta Project (TAP), an effort filled with the idealism and potential to effect social change in the city and wage war against poverty in the city started by President Jimmy Carter. This program funded by the Carter Center, was to address the social problems associated with urban poverty where some 180 private organizations committed more than \$700 million in investments to neighborhoods; and state and city governments pledged \$290 million, less than half as much. This program identified four priorities in inner-city neighborhoods: new jobs and business, safe and livable communities,

⁴⁶⁵ Goodie Mob, "Cell Therapy," *Soul Food LP*, LaFace, 1995.

adequate housing, and lifting youth and families out of poverty. It hinged on empowerment zone executive boards comprising of residents, the private sector, service providers, the Atlanta Public Schools, and the Atlanta Housing Authority. In addition, a 36-member Community Empowerment Advisory Board comprised of neighborhood representatives was charged with selecting the agencies and programs that fulfill the mission of the program. Through TAP, four of Atlanta's roughest housing projects reaped the benefits. Carver Homes, Grady Homes, Southside Homes and Washington Homes received \$100 million of federal funds and over \$150 million in tax incentives as a part of 9.3-square-mile network of 30 neighborhoods. The tax incentives attracted new business to the area, providing long term jobs for thousands of Atlantans. The Empowerment Zone received rave reviews from Brenda Muhammad, coordinator at the Southside Projects. She stated, "The Empowerment Zone is a wonderful collaboration of dreams and opportunities. Finally, communities can connect with the resources that are sorely needed to implement their plans for improvement. The Atlanta Project is facilitating that connection."⁴⁶⁶

As the Atlanta Project moved forward, major construction engulfed the downtown Atlanta area. Of this construction, the Georgia Dome, Olympic Stadium, Centennial Park and Olympic Village were most grand. The Georgia Dome, the world's largest domed Stadium with 71,250 was proposed as the new home of the Atlanta Falcons; however, it served as a venue to host most of the indoor sports of the Games. The building covered 8.9 acres of land in downtown Atlanta. Also, in preparation for the Games, construction began on a 21-acre Centennial Olympic Park—a gathering place for concerts, exhibits, food and more. In March of 1993, plans were approved to build Olympic Stadium on a lot next to Atlanta's Fulton County

⁴⁶⁶ "Atlanta Project Shares in City's Empowerment Zone Award," The Carter Center, *World Activities*, 18 June 1995.

Stadium. Centennial Olympic Stadium held 85,000 and was host the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games. Immediately after the Games, it was converted to Turner Field, the new home for Major League Baseball's Atlanta Braves.⁴⁶⁷ Much of this construction displaced poor blacks living in Atlanta's central city. There are some implications that this gentrification project pushed some blacks to homelessness. As an effort to give the city a facelift, poor blacks and the homeless were ordered to be moved by Atlanta's City Hall.

In the decade prior to the Centennial Olympiad, Atlanta's metropolitan area family income grew twice as fast as that of the national income growth rate. Simultaneously, the rate of growth for those that dwelled inside the city declined. The population shifts in respects to housing, income and employment happened in the city's northern suburbs. However, in Atlanta City Hall, an attempt to "reverse white flight" that took place in the 1960s to revitalize and take back the city occurred. However, it seemed that there was no intention to include Atlanta's poor, homeless, and overwhelmingly black population. In fact, the 1990 census indicated the poverty rate for blacks in Atlanta had increased from 29 percent in 1970 to 35 percent.⁴⁶⁸

In an effort to clean up downtown Atlanta for the Centennial Olympiad, Atlanta's City Hall passed ordinances that further criminalized and demonized Atlanta's poor and homeless. Atlanta's 20,000 homeless spent much of their time during the Olympic Games in jail. Though the Games served as the South's showpiece of progress as an international city past all racial tensions and a veritable capital of the new South worthy of tourist's dollars, the Games meant something else altogether for Atlantans. They understood that City Hall's, corporations' and government agencies' concerted efforts to strategize and revitalize the downtown business district into a 24-hour hub for shops, restaurants, and high income apartments were not for their

⁴⁶⁷ <http://www.gadome.com>

⁴⁶⁸ U.S. Census 1990; Frederick Allen, *Atlanta Rising*, (Atlanta: Longstreet, 1996), 93-94.

benefit, but at the behest of international tourists. Spearheading these efforts was the Central Atlanta Progress (CAP), an organization of the white business elite for white economic power. CAP made it perfectly clear that the poor and homeless had no place in its vision of downtown Atlanta. As such, a joint venture ensued where CAP and City Hall administrators viewed the homeless as a high priority concern and recommended a number of measures to assist the police safeguarding the image of downtown, including the creation of new police zones solely for the central downtown area, the utilization for undercover surveillance, and the construction of new zone headquarters in the CNN Center as well as in the downtown Underground District. When strictly enforced, these new zones forbade panhandling, loitering and public drunkenness. On this matter, one of the CAP members stated, “It is not an attempt to round up the homeless and move them to concentration camps....but I think everyone agrees that in order to have economic development in the central area, we really have to do something about homeless people walking up and down the street.”⁴⁶⁹ This shows the insensitive sentiments of CAP as well as city government.

The Centennial Olympic Games presented downtown planners with an opportunity to showcase their hospitality to an international community, much as the City did during the 1988 Democratic National Convention. However, in order to do so, the successful tactic used in clearing Atlanta’s homeless off the street was to simplify the process to arrest homeless people by passing laws that criminalized and demonized behaviors necessitated by the status of living on the street, or which were vague enough to be selectively enforced against undesirables. In 1991, shortly after the International Olympic Committee awarded the games to Atlanta, the City Council enacted three ordinances that effectively constituted a de facto vagrancy free zone. The

⁴⁶⁹ “No Room at the Inn but Plenty of Room in the Jail,” *Cop Watch*, [Fall 1995 Edition].

new laws outlawed soliciting alms by “forcing oneself upon the company of another;” entering vacant buildings; and walking across parking lots without owning a vehicle. These three ordinances also came in addition to an arsenal of other laws, one of which made it illegal to be in a “known drug area.”⁴⁷⁰ This somewhat cattle herding asserts that the notion of race and class worked to enforce incarceration in public spaces and bestowed boundaries to and limited the mobility of Atlanta’s poor and homeless.

Adding insensitivity towards the homeless as a result of the “Olympification” of the city, the City Council voted to increase the maximum sentence for a municipal ordinance violation from two to six years. In 1994, the city completed the construction of a new \$56 million, one thousand-bed jail, ironically the first Olympic project completed under budget and on time. It appeared as if CAP’s main goal was to run the homeless out of town and Atlanta’s City Hall did anything to help. Atlanta’s homeless were constantly harassed. Those who could not find beds in the city’s limited shelters slept in the public parks or on the sidewalks only to be awakened by the nudge of police boots at 5am or just before morning rush hour. During large tourist events, the situation worsened. Studies conducted by the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless concluded that the number of homeless arrests rose significantly shortly before large business conventions or on Friday nights. Friday nights ensured that the homeless would be forced to stay in jail until their court date on Monday. Typically, arresting officers would not be present for court, the case would be dismissed, and the homeless person could go, but, the CAP and Atlanta City hall’s objective was accomplished; the homeless had been effectively removed from public sight for the duration of the weekend.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

Atlanta City Hall's and CAP's criminalization and demonization of Atlanta's most vulnerable populations disfranchised and dehumanized the homeless as well. An example of this was seen when a homeless person with no loose change was seen asking someone for change. Often times, parking lot attendants misinterpreted this action and called the police, who arrested the homeless person. When the arresting officer appeared in court for the Monday morning hearing, the defendant face two options: to plead innocent and spend another week in jail until the trial date came, or they could plead guilty and get off for time served. If the accused chose the latter, the week in jail interfered with employment and caused them to lose their job or the chance to gain employment. After accruing a new charge on their criminal record, it was now harder for the accused to get a job and after so many convictions; a felon's voter status was vulnerable.⁴⁷²

As a part of Atlanta's preparation for the Centennial Olympiad, the city's black working class and poor communities saw the erection of "noise absorbing" walls built on the sides of the Interstates 20, as well as Interstate 75/85 and the 285 bypass. According to the city officials and the Georgia Department of Transportation, the walls were built to reduce highway traffic noise. However, it was widely believed and proven that city officials erected these walls so that travelers passing through Atlanta would not see the dire straits on the city's overwhelmingly black south, west and east sides. In the downtown and midtown areas of the city as well as on the northern suburbs, these "noise absorbing" interstate wall of this nature did not exist. Because Atlanta's west, Southwest, Southside, and Southeast side had their share of the working poor and housed examples of the poor infrastructure believed to be a detractor from the city, the walls

⁴⁷² Ibid.

were an attempt to hide this aspect of Atlanta life from the city's visitors.⁴⁷³ Perhaps the verse voiced by Cee-lo does not only speak to the fact that preparation for the Olympic Games displaced or imprisoned 20,000, it speaks to the erections of barriers that further marginalized Atlanta's black community from the rest of the world. Cee-lo's verse counter narrates the notion that Atlanta's preparation for the Games was not to benefit the city's citizen but was to serve as a marketing showcasing of the city to the world. Communities with barriers as seen in the erection of gated communities and the "noise absorbing" walls shielded on looking passersby from the real elements of that were particular to Atlanta, Georgia.

There are a plethora of other lyrics by OutKast and Goodie Mob that articulate counter narratives to Atlanta's rise to world-class status. But the examples used in this chapter were those that were able to reinforce historical arguments that centered on the contexts of Atlanta and the content of the music. In this, the music of both OutKast and Goodie Mob, serves as a living text, much like an oral history interview and the point of its use is to find actual historical experiences in which the lyrical content of the music supports. It is clear that the social critiques of OutKast and Goodie Mob as seen through the "Player's Ball,"; issues surrounding the confederate battle flag; the social critiques by Atlanta's youths in the face of the Rodney King unrest; black voting disappointment, illegal drug trafficking in Atlanta; and the displacement of the poor as a result of the Olympic show how engrained these aspects of black experience find life in the popular culture spewed and accessed critically by Atlanta's new and emerging youth culture. Both *Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik* and *Soul Food* have particular songs that feature both OutKast and Goodie Mob together embody Atlanta. There are an abundance of chronicled experiences that make this music as unique as the black Atlantan experience such as the references to the conviction of the purported Atlanta child murderer Wayne Williams in the song

⁴⁷³ Karl Barnes, interview by Maurice J. Hobson, Atlanta, GA, 11 December 2007.

by Goodie Mob featuring Dre called “Thought Process.” However, that analysis would be more cultural than historical. As such, a good cultural analysis of the music of OutKast and Goodie Mob would force history scholars to often move outside of the scope of historical research which found its limitations as a result of this historical analysis. What should be considered is that Atlanta’s rise to world class status and the social cost paid by overwhelmingly black and poor populations shaped the contours of the popular public sentiment towards the preparation of the Olympic Games as seen by Atlanta’s working poor and homeless. The coined concept of the “Dirty South” in regards to the black New South provides the critical need to make sense of these meanings, definitions, and appropriation of black southern life and experience after the passage of the Voting Rights act of 1965.

Cameron Gipp’s reference to Maynard Jackson in his verse of “Git Up! Git Out” best demonstrates the frustration expressed by poor blacks in his depiction of the Mayor as crooked. It also counter narrates Atlanta’s black Mecca status from the perspective of black Youths, no longer willing to ceded sacred status to Jackson. Perhaps Du Bois’ counter narrative illustrated through golden apples manifested itself through Gipp some 90 years later. It is important to understand the significance of Atlanta’s indigenous popular culture and the politicized moment in which it was spewed and assessed critically. Yet, Dirty South Hip hop artists were not the only critics taking note to Atlanta’s quest for golden apples. John Helyar, of the *Wall Street Journal* wrote: “It is a land of Mercedes and the mall, of the hungry and the homeless....It is “Hotlanta”: capital city of the South at a time when the South has risen; city myriad services at a time when the service economy rules; city of the 1980s, more suburban than downtown, more footloose than fixed. If New York is the Big Apple and New Orleans the Big Easy, Atlanta is

the Big Hustle.”⁴⁷⁴ Considering this, speaking to the Olympic spirit in Atlanta made W.E.B. Du Bois’s prophecy true. There is a saying of precedence on this notion simply put in these terms; “every thing that glitters, isn’t gold.

⁴⁷⁴ John Helyar, “The Big Hustle—Atlanta’s Two Worlds: Wealth and Poverty, Magnet and Mirage—The Metropolitan Area Grows as the Core City Shrinks; Will a Shooting Star Fall?—New Waves at the Bust Station,” *Wall Street Journal*, New York, New York, 29 February 1988, 1.

CONCLUSION

In as much as we attempt to understand African American history and race relations in the United States, one would be remised if neglecting to study Atlanta, Georgia. The African American experience in Atlanta, Georgia along with its people are points of interest for pundits and scholars alike as the City represents the greatest successes and failures for African Americans seen by these United States. As a Deep South city, Atlanta markings by the sordid racial history of the American South were seen through the episodes of the Atlanta Riots of 1906, urban unrests of the 1960s, and the missing and murdered children crisis of the 1970s and 80s. However, Atlanta rose as a “City on the Hill” in respect to race relations which manifested itself through black political empowerment and electoral politics and transitioned the city from regional to global commercial center hosting the 1988 Democratic National Convention and the Centennial Olympic Games. It is this component that set Atlanta apart as unique southern enclave.

At the dawning of the Twentieth Century, Atlanta was the center of black achievement in the South as well as the nation with much of that reputation being centered on black education. However, it is important to note the abounding themes centered on the fundamental impact of education linked to liberating black communities. This is arguably the most important acquisition for African Americans throughout their experience in this country. Education serves as an interesting scope when investigating southern African American life and history because it was influenced by geo-politics, social, cultural and economic factors. With this, it is critical to note the crucial understanding of African American educational history, while recognizing that in American democracy there have been classes of oppressed people and there have been

essential relationships between popular education and the politics of oppression. Education for both democratic citizenship and second-class citizenship found its roots in American education. However, these opposing traditions were not the difference between the mainstream of American education and some aberrations or isolated alternatives. Similar to what historian James Anderson's *The Education of Blacks in the South* explains, when understanding the unique system of public and private education developed by and for black southerners; it is a critical need to understand that the structure, ideology, and content of black education was part and parcel of the larger political subordination of blacks, because it was the social system in which blacks lived that made their educational experiences than those of other Americans.⁴⁷⁵

The American South, as other distinct regions in the nation, provide different sensibilities, trends, tensions, and characteristics shaped by geo-political, social, cultural and economic factors of its people of particular areas. As such, Atlanta, Georgia catapulted herself in the Twentieth Century by refashioning herself as the capitol of the New South with what was purported to be, a white business elite willing to work with Atlanta's black community. Unlike other southern urban areas, Atlanta is unique and it has been historically deemed the "promise land" of the New South for African Americans. With newly freed blacks migrating from rural landscapes in the South to Atlanta for work with ideas of securing a better quality of life than that of pre-Emancipation servitude along with the migration of African American's in pursuit of higher education simultaneously converging on the City after the Civil War provides an interesting point of departure in terms of class formation and division within Atlanta's black community. Those African Americans seeking education formed a thriving black upper and middle class largely created and sustained by Atlanta's unique system of historically black

⁴⁷⁵ James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 1.

institutions of higher learning. It is through this unique cluster of black higher educational institutions where it is critical to for understanding class formation and division within black Atlanta.

As black Atlanta's educated community gained strength, scholar-activists Du Bois and Hope promoted the "talented tenth" a notion of racial uplift ideology that would guide black America. Cultivating a group to lead and masses to follow presents a contentious point whereas it may be more necessary to focus more on the ninety percent than the ten percent set aside for leadership. As such, we should consider that the black institutions of higher learning positioned Atlanta's black elite and middle classes as power brokers that fostered the "Atlanta Style" politics of bi-racial negotiation and gave way for Atlanta's black urban regime and white business elites to control the city. Through "Atlanta Style" politics of bi-racial negotiation, black elites bargaining on behalf of Atlanta's rank and file without consultation is problematic. Atlanta's black elites and the middle class advanced programs expressing their own political, social, and economic interests while most of Atlanta's black communities lived in poverty where we see some of the most disparaging living conditions imaginable. This challenges the Kerner report's conclusion that America was two societies; one black and one white that were moving in different directions and asserts that the American South in general and Atlanta in particular were three societies; one white and two black. This demonstration is a major point of contention and is but one factor worthy of considerable attention and research and provides the significance to understanding Atlanta.

Atlanta's black political experiences are central when assessing black political power in American cities, in general, and black political power in the post Civil Rights American South, in particular. This salience quantifies legal changes sustained since passing the Civil Rights Acts of

1964 and the Voters Rights Act of 1965, which removed de jure legal barriers to black voter participation. Along with black reverse migration; the migration of blacks from rural to urban areas; and white flight, what resulted were black majorities as well as significant black minority populations in other American cities. As a result of black political participation, blacks assembled majorities and sizable minorities with political influences where the political culture called for their participation. An understanding of this can be seen through the 1973 mayoral election of Maynard H. Jackson Jr.

Before the November 2008 election of Barack H. Obama as the 44th American president and the first U.S. president to identify as African American, the election of Maynard Holbrook Jackson Jr. as Atlanta's and the South's first big time mayor was one of the most notable feats in American political history for African Americans. Inspired by the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, Jackson entered politics in quixotic fashion in 1968, challenging Herman Talmadge for his U.S. senate seat. His run for the U.S. Senate failed, but he had gained prominence in Atlanta's political circles. The youthful Jackson's new reputation annoyed the black political king makers in Atlanta as he challenged the advancement of political programs and the "Atlanta Style" of bi-racial negotiations. Sure, Jackson embodied Atlanta's black middle class, but to the City's exclusive black Old Guard he had not paid his dues and therefore was unworthy of political candidacy. However, we should note that Jackson's ascension to political power was based on demographical research where black migration back South combined with white flight were changing the City. Jackson's commissioning of survey polls and results convinced Atlanta's Old Guard that he was the most viable candidate. This secured his election as Vice-Mayor and Mayor.

Jackson's election to Mayor in 1973 summed up Atlanta's black Mecca status, a city flourishing in the midst of white flight. But Jackson's victory was not solely because of the black vote. He received votes in many of the predominantly white precincts suggesting a bi-racial coalition that would be pertinent to Jackson's first two terms as Mayor. Jackson's fought tooth and nail over the city charter, urban renewal, public housing, public transportation, annexation, and consolidation all of which speak to the issue of race and space.

Jackson's accomplishments were astounding. By 1976, Atlanta's crime rates were down, which had been a previous blight on the city. Atlanta's rapid rail system, MARTA, began during Jackson's administration. Jackson was committed to instituting affirmative action programs wherever possible in the city, with a special emphasis on minority contracting. By his second term, minorities were receiving more than 30 percent of the city contracts, which further developed an already solid black middle class in Atlanta. Jackson was instrumental in the successful expansion of the Hartsfield International Airport (now Hartfield-Jackson International Airport), which was finished ahead of schedule and under budget. These projects created many jobs for Atlantans. All of these entities worked together to show Atlanta as a city that could handle the world's traffic. Jackson's prowess endorsed him as the poster boy for the New South. Some called him the "King of the South" while others coined him "the ultimate champion for black business."⁴⁷⁶

In his first time as mayor, Jackson was loved and adored by the vast majority of Atlanta's black voters and a significant number of the city's white voters. But a series of events caused some unrest within his constituencies consisting of white Atlantans, along with the black working and poor classes. Through these events, Jackson's black working and poor constituency

⁴⁷⁶ Derek T. Dingle, "The Ultimate Champion for Black Business," *Black Enterprise: Your Ultimate Guide to Financial Empowerment*, September 2003.

questioned his commitment to a better world for all of the citizens and they expressed their resentment toward him. The two events of the greatest significance: the first being Jackson's dismissal of Atlanta's mostly black sanitation workers, as they hit the picket line in March of 1977 where he had marched with these same workers when they struck in 1970; and what was perceived as the mishandling of the Atlanta Youth Murders, of which he moved his family out of overwhelmingly black Southwest Atlanta to exclusively white Buckhead in 1981. The significance of these events is that one can measure class division centered on Atlanta's new notoriety.

Undeniably, what was clear was the fact that Atlanta was well on her way to being the next American global commercial center and the commercial branding of the American South with black decision makers at the helm. What was unclear were the social costs that was paid by Atlanta's black poor and working communities through this transition. By the end of Jackson's second term, his legacy would be marred by a crisis of unsurpassable wickedness which loomed over the city and hunted Atlanta's poor black children.

The end of Maynard Jackson's first mayoral tenure was marked by political in-fighting within black political circles. This was evident of the emerging schisms indicative of black Atlanta's political maturity. However, the schisms were enhanced by the Atlanta Youth Murders. The fact that Atlanta's most vulnerable citizens, primarily poor black children, were being hunted is of the most significant importance to understanding not only race, but class tensions within black America.

The Atlanta Youth Murders provide a counter-narrative on class to Atlanta's black Mecca status as well as a series of rumors and eccentric theories as to whom and for what reasons the murders were being committed. It engaged pedophilia and homosexuality within the black

community in different terms. Most importantly, it engaged the highly problematic culture of poverty theory. The fact that the mostly poor black male youth victims were labeled and dismissed as “hustlers and runaways” attempts to lend credence to the culture of poverty theory; a social theory that asserts, in very bad taste, that the cycle of poverty based on the concept that the poor have a unique value system and they remain in poverty because of their adaptations to the burdens of poverty. It is important to understand that this theory’s employment by the Atlanta police, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation was used to prevent these entities from admitting that there was a serial killer on the loose in Atlanta. In an attempt to calm public fear local, state and federal administrations controlled the criteria as to which murders made it on the Atlanta missing and murdered children’s list. Official records indicate that there were 30 victims throughout this episode. However, botched police work, slow lead responses, and apprehension of FBI involvement suggested to black Atlantans that there was a conspiracy afoot.

In an attempt to shed light on the cases with hopes of bringing the killer(s) to justice, debunking the pathologizing “hustler and runaway” myths about victims, and to secure the protection of potential victims in the future, the formation of the STOP Committee by Camille Bell and the Techwood Bat Patrol by Chimurenga Jenga speaks to black Atlantans skepticism in City Hall ability to protect them. What becomes apparent is the fact that if there had been a white mayor at the helm of the City during the Missing and Murdered episode in Atlanta; then Atlanta’s black communities would have stormed City Hall. But a black City Administration quelled most civil unrest for fear that it would tarnish Maynard Jackson. With this in mind, readers must understand the importance of the roles of the STOP Committee and the Techwood Bat Patrol; to hold Jackson and the rest of the City Administration accountable regardless of his

race. This, along with dishonest business practices for the STOP Committee along with the carrying of firearms by member who were also convicted felons in regards to the Techwood Bat Patrol led to their demise. It is clear that the technicalities within the law were at work which silenced these groups for shedding light on the murders. But again we see the handiwork of class divisions within Atlanta black communities. A point to note, is that when Camille Bell, the founder of the STOP Committee asked questions centered on impact of class as seen through the episode of Atlanta's Missing and Murdered children, she was met with no answer. In Atlanta, this put Atlanta's black rank and file on the brink of class consciousness and provides a counter-narrative of Atlanta as profound as "Dirty South" Hip hop.

The arrest and subsequent conviction of Wayne Williams lends credence to the notion that a conspiracy was afoot also. Williams is a strange character with charlatan qualities convicted of two of the murders. He knew and was in contact with the victims prior to their deaths. However, the fact that Mayor Jackson pressed for federal aid in this case to be shunned by the FBI for most of the episode to the arrests and conviction of Wayne Williams brought to justice by numerous eye-witness accounts and fiber analysis through new technology provided by FBI laboratories seems suspicious. Though Williams was convicted of two murders, local, state and federal police pinned most of the murders on Williams and closed out the cases as if all of the murders had been solved. But most important is the fact that many in black Atlanta felt that Williams was not the killer and that another killer was on the loose. Duly noted is that after Williams is taken into custody, there were murders around the Atlanta still being committed. Yet, these murders were concealed from the public as Atlanta expanded and needed nothing to beset its growth.

When Andrew Young was elected to Mayor of Atlanta in 1981, it continued what was perceived to be black political empowerment through electoral politics. Young had won critical acclaim as a lieutenant of Dr. Martin Luther King and as a minister. His stints in state and national politics made him electable. What is significant about the transition of power between Maynard Jackson and Young was that Young inherited a debt-free city, and unexpected feat for the new black City administration. However, the 1980s proved to be altogether different, providing new challenges to local politics nationwide. The nation was still reeling from the corruption in national politics and had lost faith in the American government. Also, the nation was in the midst of numerous wars; of which the Cold War and the War on Drugs took precedence. But the rise of Reaganomics, Crack Cocaine, the AIDS epidemic and post industrial conditioning made it difficult to run a city. When President Ronald Reagan cut federal funding to American cities, Young found it necessary to fund and expand the city through foreign investments and neo-liberalistic forms of urban renewal and gentrification. Atlanta's white business elite saw these neo-liberalist tactics as selling the city to the Japanese while most of Atlanta's black community saw a business-minded and globetrotting mayor with plan to deal with issues pertinent to the poor. With this, Young's citizen of the world persona was not a good fit for Atlanta's black community because it seemed that he did not embody their interests.

During the Young years, what is significant was the emergence and impact of Crack Cocaine which caused crime in Atlanta's black ghettos to skyrocket. The subsequent rise of murders, rapes, armed robberies and assaults were overwhelming and Young's grappling with issues of police brutality and public safety expressed the lack of confidence that Atlanta's black community would eventually have towards the mayor. However, his ability to fundraise and bring together foreign investors was brilliant. Young used his savior-faire and political influence

to refashion a city worthy the 1988 Democratic National Convention and the Centennial Olympiad. The Democratic National Convention served as the dress rehearsal for the Centennial Olympiad and from this event it was clear that Atlanta was a new City to consider worthy of hosting events world's stage. But Atlanta's overwhelming poor and black did not share this vision of their city nor were they at the center of the commercialization of the America South. The significance of this is that once again, the issue of class within the black community presents itself as more divisive than cohesive.

The calculated and concerted steps taken by Atlanta's white business elite and black city government to bid for the Centennial Olympic Games lends credence to regime theory and shows that issues along racial lines could be appeased through acquisition of capital. With this, the emergence of a diverse cohort convening a plan of action to generate the necessary funds that would give Atlanta a competitive bid for the Games formed. The cohort included officers of some of Atlanta's fortune 500 companies including the Coca-Cola Company, and Delta Airlines along with politicians Maynard Jackson, Mayor Andrew Young.

Once awarded the Centennial Games Bid, the two movements of paramount importance commenced are referred to as the "olympification" of Atlanta. The fact that a joint effort between the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the Atlanta Organizing Committee (AOC) worked to get the city ready for the Games is of extreme importance. The second movement, the Atlanta Project, gave way to social change in Atlanta waging war against poverty within in the city. Started by the former U.S. president, humanitarian and Georgia native Jimmy Carter, this project had good intentions. But in the end, it did very little for Atlanta's poor. Between these two projects, major construction engulfed Atlanta's downtown area from which the Georgia Dome, Olympic Stadium, Centennial Park, and Olympic Village resulted. These

new edifices were grand feats for Atlanta and the Olympics, but a grim and dismal story of gentrification, incarceration, and displacement of poor blacks lurked in its shadow. The significance of this is that it gives purview to the impact of political economy on urban renewal and gentrification. As Atlanta cleaned up its downtown for the Centennial Games, City Hall passed number of ordinances that further criminalized and demonized Atlanta's poor and homeless. It is noted that more than 20,000 homeless persons in Atlanta were incarcerated the Olympic Games. The Atlanta Project's completion of a new \$56 million, thousand bed jail which was the first Olympic project completed on time is problematic. The fact that the number of homeless arrests rose significantly shortly before large business conventions, eventful weekends along with the fact jails were full during the Games not only lends credence to the impact of political economy; but asserts the critical need for another counter-narratives to Atlanta's international and black Mecca status.

With Atlanta's new found world class status, an in-road for a counter-narrative as seen through a southern perspective of popular culture was spewed and assessed critically in the City. This particular aspect of popular culture grounded itself in Hip Hop and centered on this particular sector of youth culture, were the meanings and significance of the recently self-defined southern-style of rap and Hip-hop culture called "Dirty South" Hip-hop established and promoted by OutKast and Goodie Mob, rap groups hailing from Atlanta's Southwest. Their music imbibed aesthetic that is particular to the South and was consumed by markets nationwide. But this music was Atlanta specific and is used as a supplement to the documented research in fleshing out a black working and poor counter-narrative to Atlanta's new world-class status. The significance in using popular culture from Atlanta provides an interesting scope to the emerging tensions and trends that were particular to Atlanta as a result of the "Olympification" of the city.

OutKast, were the first Hip-hop artists embracing “southernness” and providing purview where the life experiences of growing up in Atlanta can be accessed and analyzed. Their multi-platinum classic "Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik" made them a force to be reckoned in the recording industry and confronted the Los Angeles and New York Coastal hegemony. Goodie Mob quickly followed their Dungeon Family label mates in 1995, with their release of *Soul Food*. The messages conveyed in this early form of “Dirty South” Hip Hop speak with a voice that gives a counter-narrative social critique of Atlanta’s rise to world-class status. This music calls out City Officials, events, and social issues by name that are pertinent to Atlanta, Georgia as a result of the “olympification” of the city. The lyrics of this music are as credible as the oral history interviews collected for this dissertation. The text has been supported with documentation and informs listeners of the destitution and oppression experienced in the black communities of Atlanta, where some considered the Maynard Machine as part of the problem.

What is clear here is that a gap existed between the generation of Maynard Jackson and Atlanta’s youth in the early 1990s. OutKast and Goodie Mob take aim at City officials such as Maynard Jackson; issues surrounding the confederate battle flag being flown atop the Georgia Dome; the displacement of the poor and homeless; the establishment of the “Red Dog” police unit; and the enactment of city ordinances to preserve the City’s new facelift for the Games. To an extent, they provide purview to the underbelly of the life experiences black Atlanta’s rank and file. It also demonstrates that the Olympic Spirit was not embodied by or intended for the poor and black of Atlanta.

For future works spawned from this research, this scholar intends to continue in this same vein examining other black political experiences in black New South urban and rural space. Comparative studies of other southern cities that have exercised black political power such as

Birmingham, Jackson, New Orleans, Richmond and Charleston are necessary and important as I continue to examine the black experiences of the post Civil Rights South. With this, I am cultivating a new subset within African American studies. For far too long, the Black South has been long misrepresented and overlooked. Though there have been recent developments that focus on southern urban areas, most of African American history and African American studies rests on the development of black urban communities without taking into account black life in culture in the rural black South. There have been limited studies on the impact of Crack Cocaine, HIV and AIDS, educational tracking on black rural spaces, areas that have been affected heavily by these factors. This research will cultivate a sub-genre that I call Black New South Studies. Its rigorous research and scholarship will focus on the experiences of African Americans and in the post Civil Rights South era. This interdisciplinary field investigates and challenges tensions and trends that have often been overlooked by scholars studying African Americans, seeking to analyze and explicate national and international implications centered on history, urban and rural popular culture, education, electoral politics, land ownership, health disparities, sociology, psychology, religion and spirituality, and business just to name a few. This black new South concept is of major importance because the American South, in some ways, is still plagued by the negative legacy of Jim Crow, but the 20th century social movements of Civil Rights and black power have changed the South in many ways from which emerges an overabundance of trends and themes worthy of investigation. With this, our interests should focus on these experiences where in the post-Civil Rights South, some black communities thrived.

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APPENDIX A: ATLANTA YOUTH MURDERS

Table 1. Atlanta Youth Murders – Smith

Edward Smith, Age 14

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
July 21, 1979 July 28, 1979	.22 caliber gunshot wound	Not apparent	Last seen by friends on the way to a skating rink; had been seen at a party where drugs were used, speculated that he was killed during a fight over drugs	Lived with his mother, stepfather, two sisters and one stepbrother in public housing. He frequented a boys club in the project; attended Therrell High School; often stayed out of the house. Noted as a normal street kid who roamed the streets

Table 2. Atlanta Youth Murders – Evans

Alfred Evans, Age 13

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
July 25, 1979 July 28, 1979	Probable asphyxiation by strangulation	Earned spending money by running errands and bagging groceries at the Stewart Lakewood shopping center, where several other victims also worked for spending money.	Last seen on his way to a Bruce Lee movie on Peachtree Street	Lived with parents Lois and Henry, a construction worker permanently disabled by a stroke and eight siblings in a southeast Atlanta housing project. the family survived on food stamps and \$450 a month in welfare and disability checks.

Table 3. Atlanta Youth Murders – Harvey

Milton Harvey, Age 4

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
September 4, 1979 November 5, 1979	Not determined	Earned spending money by running errands.	Last seen riding bike in	Not available

Table 4. Atlanta Youth Murders – Bell**Yusef Bell, Age 9**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
Oct. 21, 1979 Nov. 8, 1979	Asphyxiation, strangulation by choke hold	Earned spending money by running errands for elderly tenants and balancing checkbooks for neighbors.	Last seen on a snuff tobacco run for elderly neighbor	Lived with mother, brother and sister in an apartment in the McDaniel Glenn Housing Project; noted as a math and science whiz, enrolled in a school for gifted children.

Table 5. Atlanta Youth Murders – Lanier**Angel Lanier¹, Age 12**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
March 4, 1980 March 10, 1980	Asphyxiation by electrical cord.	Not apparent.	Not apparent. Noted that her regular scheduled was that every day after school, she came home, ate dinner and watched TV.	Lived with mother, Venus Taylor, 32, a Chicago cocktail waitress divorced after her fourth marriage, who moved to Atlanta

¹Female**Table 6. Atlanta Youth Murders – Mathis****Jeffrey Mathis, 10**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
March 11, 1980 February 13, 1981	Not determined.	Earned spending money by working odd jobs at the W. A. Williams' barbershop.	Last seen running an errand to buy a pack of Pall Malls for a neighbor. Witnesses told police, he climbed into a blue car with two men, one white, one black.	Lived with mother, Willie Mae Mathis, who raised seven children mostly alone. Mrs. Mathis husband was murdered seven years earlier while moonlighting as a night security guard at a cemetery

Table 7. Atlanta Youth Murders – Middlebrooks

Eric Middlebrooks, Age 14				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
May 19, 1980 May 20, 1981	Blunt trauma to the head.	Earned spending money by working odd jobs for neighbors.	Last seen after receiving a late- night telephone call. He was found bludgeoned to death the next morning beside his bicycle behind a southeast Atlanta bar near his home.	Lived with guardian Robert Miller. He was abandoned a few months after birth and raised by relatives and family friends.

Table 8. Atlanta Youth Murders - Richardson

Christopher Richardson, Age 12				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
June 9, 1980 January 9, 1981	Not determined.	Not apparent.	Last seen walking to swimming pool at Midway Park, a half mile from his home in Decatur, DeKalb County.	Lived in grandfather's house with his mother and other relatives after his stepfather went to jail for theft. His biological father was serving a 15-year sentence for armed robbery.

Table 9. Atlanta Youth Murders - Wilson

Latonya Wilson¹, Age 7				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
June 22, 1980 October 18, 1980	Not determined.	Not apparent.	Last seen sleeping in her bedroom during her birthday slumber party.	Lived mother and father and four siblings; Her mother, Ella Wilson asserted “they were poor, but happy.” Her parents were subjected to a polygraph test.

¹Female

Table 10. Atlanta Youth Murders - Wyche

Aaron Wyche, Age 10				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
June 23, 1980 June 24, 1980	Asphyxiation from broken neck due to fall.	Not apparent.	Found faced down at the bottom of a 25-foot-high railroad trestle after he fell or was pushed; originally ruled an accident: death by "positional asphyxiation." DeKalb County police reviewed the case, learned that a number of other black youngsters were found within a few miles of Wyche, and discovered “trace evidence” at the scene that might connect him to other cases.	Lived with mother and two younger brothers in a low-income southeast Atlanta neighborhood. Visited grandmother often who lived on a quiet, integrated street in DeKalb County.

Table 11. Atlanta Youth Murders – Carter

Anthony Carter, Age 9				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
July 6, 1980 July 7, 1980	Multiple Stab wounds	Earned spending money by running errands for neighbors.	Last seen playing with a cousin. Found within a two-square-mile area of the homes of five other missing or murdered children.	Attended the West End Boy’s Club.

Table 12. Atlanta Youth Murders - Terrell**Earl Lee Terrell, Age 10**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
July 30, 1980 January 9, 1981	Not determined.	Earned spending money by doing odd jobs near the Stewart- Lakewood Shopping Center.	Last seen after being ejected from the Southbend Park Swimming Pool for fighting poolside.	Lived with mother, Beverly Belt and three brothers.

Table 13. Atlanta Youth Murders – Jones**Clifford Jones, Age 13**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
Aug. 20, 1980 Aug. 21, 1980	Asphyxiation by strangulation.	Earned spending money by scouring lots with friends for redeemable cans and bottles.	Last seen scouting aluminum cans with friends.	Lived with mother, Clifford Jones, two brothers and one sister. Raised also by grandmother, Dorothy Williams, who helped the family after their father was killed in Vietnam.

Table 14. Atlanta Youth Murders – Glass**Darron Glass, Age 11**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
Sept. 14, 1980 Never found	N/A	Not apparent.	Last seen leaving his home where his foster mother assumed that he had gone out to play.	Both of Glass’ parents were deceased. He lived with his foster mother, Fannie Mae Smith and three other children. He had lived with the family for less than three months when he disappeared.

Table 15. Atlanta Youth Murders - Stephens**Charles Stephens, Age 12**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
October 9, 1980 October 10, 1980	Asphyxiation.	Earned spending money by carrying grocery bags for patrons of the Stewart Lakewood Shopping Center. Stephens bought comic books with money he earned.	Last seen riding his bicycle after slipping out of the house on the day which he stayed on from school.	Lived with mother and sister, Tina, age 11 in a two-bedroom home in southwest Atlanta’s Pryor Village Housing Project. When Stephens’ mother’s \$337-a-month public assistance checks ran out, usually after two weeks, his uncle, Richard Gibbs, a father figure and soul singer would trundle would bring bags of groceries so the family could eat. Charles’ parents split when he was a toddler.

Table 16. Atlanta Youth Murders - Jackson**Aaron Jackson, Age 9**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
November 1, 1980 November 2, 1980	Asphyxiation by suffocation.	Earned spending money by carrying groceries and running errands for neighbors.	Not apparent.	Lived with father, a \$5-an-hour roofer who worked long hours, and two older sisters in a green cinder-block house in a lower income southeast Atlanta neighborhood. It is noted that the PTA took up a collection because the family was so poor and friends once raised money to turn on the gas. Aaron often went barefoot, in dirty clothes, as he worked for spare change carrying groceries and running errands. A neighbor once found him asleep on her couch, after he’d broken into the house and helped himself to food in her refrigerator.

Table 17. Atlanta Youth Murders - Rogers**Patrick Rogers, Age 16**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
Nov. 10, 1980 Dec. 8, 1980	Blunt trauma to the head.	Earned spending money by running errands at the shopping center.	Last seen running errands at the shopping center.	Lived with his mother and seven brothers and sisters. It is noted that he preferred the streets to the crowded family home.

Table 18. Atlanta Youth Murders – Geter**Lubie Geter, Age 14**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
January 3, 1981 February 5, 1981	Asphyxiation by choke-hold strangulation.	Earned spending money by selling auto air fresheners at the Stewart Lakewood Shopping Center. It is said that he invested his Christmas money in the venture.	Last seen selling auto air fresheners at the Stewart Lakewood Shopping Center.	Lived with parents Assie Lee and Lubie Sr., and four siblings in a modest two-bedroom southeast Atlanta home. He was the youngest of the children. Lubie Sr. was a Veterans' Administration hospital chef.

Table 19. Atlanta Youth Murders - Pue**Terry Pue, Age 15**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
January 22, 1981 January 23, 1981	Asphyxiation.	Earned spending money by pilfering a backroom of the A&P store where he would then redeem the bottles. It is said that he was extremely street savvy.	Last seen at an all- night diner eating hamburgers. It was not clear at what point he disappeared.	Lived with mother, father, and ten siblings in an overcrowded three-room apartment. The housing authority could never find a place large enough for the Pues. Once, after being evicted, the desperate family spent two nights in Grady Hospital's emergency room. He was enrolled in special education program for youthful offenders. He thrived in the program.

Table 20. Atlanta Youth Murders - Baltazar**Patrick Baltazar, Age 12**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
February 6, 1981 February 13, 1981	Asphyxiation.	May have been a concessions boy for the Atlanta Hawks.	Last seen at the Omni in downtown Atlanta.	Lived with his divorced father, Russell Baltazar, who had recently dispatched most of his 14 children to live with Patrick's mother in New Orleans. Patrick stayed behind. Patrick was quite large for his age at 5 feet 7 and 130 pounds.

Table 21. Atlanta Youth Murders - Jackson**Curtis Walker, Age 13**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
February 19, 1981 March 6, 1981	Asphyxiation by strangulation.	Earned spending money by working after school at the local car wash with his little brother, Antonio, to scrub whitewalls for \$1. Also swept up at the gun shop of Archie Byron, a Vietnam veteran.	Last seen leaving the Archie Byron's Gun Shop after slipping out of the house to find work. His mother, fearful about the killings, had ordered him to play upstairs.	Lived with mother, divorced and three brothers in Bowen Homes housing project in northwest Atlanta. He gave half of what he earned to his mother, Catherine Leach, 32, who supported the family on food stamps and a \$221 monthly welfare check.

Table 22. Atlanta Youth Murders - Bell

Joseph "Jo-Jo" Bell **, Age 15				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	"Hustle"	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
March 2, 1981 April 19, 1981	Asphyxiation by strangulation.	Earned spending money by sometimes sweeping the floors Cap'n Pegs Seafood Carryout.	Last seen leaving to play basketball.	Lived for three years with his grandmother while his mother, Doris Bell, served time in prison for killing his father, a construction worker. After her stint in prison, Doris Bell moved her family into a rented, gray frame house, found work as a janitor and dedicated herself to taking care of her other six children.

Table 23. Atlanta Youth Murders - Hill

Timothy Hill, Age 13				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	"Hustle"	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
March 15, 1981 March 30, 1981	Asphyxiation, manner not determined.	Earned spending money by carrying grocery bags at the A&P, and sweeping the floors at a local fast food restaurant.	Not apparent.	Lived in Atlanta's impoverished south side. It is noted that he grew up fast running, with a group of friends who carried knives and metal pipes for use against anyone who might try to snatch them. A frequent runaway, he often spent the night in vacant houses, or with friends. He read at a first-grade level.

Table 24. Atlanta Youth Murders - Duncan

Eddie Duncan, Age 21				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	"Hustle"	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
March 20, 1981 March 31, 1981	Not determined.	Earned spending money by stacking boxes and carrying out trash at a grocery store where he worked part-time.	Not apparent.	Lived with his divorced mother in the Techwood Homes Housing Project. he was a mentally retarded black man with an IQ of 40 who stuttered when he talked and walked with a limp. He dropped out of school.

Table 25. Atlanta Youth Murders - Rogers

Larry Rogers, Age 21				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	"Hustle"	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
Mar. 30, 1981 April 9, 1981	Asphyxiation by strangulation.	Earned spending money by cutting grass, raking leaves and cleaning out gutters for neighbors in his northwest Atlanta neighborhood	Last seen climbing into a Chevrolet station wagon driven by a mysterious black, described as 50-ish with a "false-looking" mustache, glasses and long hair.	Lived with foster parent, George W. Hood and five other foster children. Hood was a retired barber whose wife died in 1965. Rogers was 15 months old when social workers brought him to the house. He began to talk, with a stammer, the first hint of his disabilities. It was said that he was mentally retarded with the mind of a child.

Table 26. Atlanta Youth Murders - McIntosh**Michael McIntosh, Age 23**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
Approx. April 1, 1981 April 20, 1981	Asphyxiation, manner undetermined	Earned spending money by hustling odd jobs in the same rat- infested, tarpaper- roofed inner- city neighborhood in which he lived.	Not apparent.	Lived in a yellow frame house on cinder blocks -- left to him by the great-aunt who raised him -- until he lit a fire in the bricked-up fireplace, fell asleep and burned up his only asset. One of nine children, he was too much of a burden for his mother. He dropped out after finishing the 10th grade at Parks High School, and began getting in trouble. He was in and out of prison for burglary, assault and drunkenness. Lately, friends said, he had talked about finishing welding school.

Table 27. Atlanta Youth Murders - Payne**Jimmy Payne, Age 21**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
April 22, 1981 April 27, 1981	Asphyxiation by strangulation.	A recently released convict, Payne aspired to be a construction worker.	Last seen heading to downtown Atlanta to sell Canadian coins.	One of five children, Payne dropped out of high school after the 9th grade, when he began to get in trouble. He learned to draw in state prison, where he served time for burglary before he was released.

Table 28. Atlanta Youth Murders - Barrett**William Barrett**, Age 17**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
May 11, 1981 May 12, 1981	Asphyxiation by strangulation.	Earned spending by working odd jobs.	Last seen on his way to McDaniel- Glenn Housing Project to pay a bill for his mother to a man. He rode the MARTA bus to the errand and later returned to East Atlanta. He was scheduled for a counseling session that afternoon but vanished.	Barrett was considered a juvenile delinquent because he had spent time in the Milledgeville Youth Development Center. He was released from there on March 10, 1981, precisely two months before his murder.

Table 29. Atlanta Youth Murders - Cater**Nathaniel Cater, Age 27**

Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
May 21, 1981 May 24, 1981	Asphyxiation by strangulation.	Earned spending money by picking up odd jobs through Add- A Man labor pool. On days when he did not get a job, he hung around the Silver Dollar Saloon or the Cameo Lounge, to hustle suckers, male and female— mostly whites well dressed out-of- towners for cheap sex.	Not apparent.	Cater had moved out of his father’s home in Dixie Hills and was living in the Falcon Hotel, a rundown single room occupancy on Luckie Street, near the Greyhound bus station in downtown Atlanta. Cater, an ex-convict was also a chronic alcoholic which would land him in the city jail. His drinking often left him helpless.

Table 30. Atlanta Youth Murders - Porter

John Porter, Age 28				
Last Seen Body Found	Cause of Death	“Hustle”	Activities at abduction	<u>Conditions</u>
Early April, 1981 April 12, 1981	Multiple stab wounds.	Not apparent,	Not apparent.	An ex-convicted, Porter lived sometimes with grandmother. She had kicked him out of the house because of his behavior. He suffered from severe mental problems and had been in a mental hospital. Just before his abduction, he was kicked out by his grandmother for fondling a 2-year-old-boy for whom she cared.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Maurice J. Hobson graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1999 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a minor in African American Studies. He completed his Master of Arts degree in American Studies with a focus in African American Studies from the University of Alabama in 2002. Before pursuing his doctorate degree in History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Hobson served as an instructor of American Studies at the University of Alabama and History faculty and staff administrator at Tuskegee University. Following completion of his Ph.D., he will work as the Managing Director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Center at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.